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EASTERN INTERIOR FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE  
REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

Fairbanks, Alaska  
March 7, 2001  
9:00 o'clock a.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Gerald Nicholia  
Craig Fleener  
David James  
Charles Miller  
Jim Wilde  
Coordinator; Donald Mike

## P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I'd like to call this meeting to order.

MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, yesterday we completed Regional Council member's report and today we're at Item No. VII on the agenda, 2000 Annual Report and review and the 805 letter.

Mr. Chair, the 805 letter that we submitted to the Board is on Tab D. The 805 letter was basically going over the proposals that were submitted to the Federal Subsistence Board and there's a list of proposals that the Board took action on at their December meeting. We can go over each proposal if it's the Council's wishes. Mr. Chair, do you want me to go over the proposals? The 805 letter under Tab D, it's towards the back.

CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I think we already went over that.

MR. MIKE: Okay, we can go ahead with the annual report. The annual report, at the last meeting in Tanana, the Council went over the annual report items and I tried to capture the main points on the annual report that the Council discussed last meeting. There's a draft -- I provided a copy to the Council members, the draft annual report, the annual report topics that were discussed at the Tanana meeting last fall. One we have intensive management. Two, is comprehensive study of muskrat populations. And three, is the Upper Yukon Salmon management plan. And these items were discussed at the last meeting and the Council requested that these be on the annual report to be submitted to the Board.

The Council, at their last meeting in Tanana, they got a response from the Federal Subsistence Board on intensive management and the Council did not agree, basically on the response that the Board gave. Basically, the Board said as far as intensive management on conservation use, the Board may not adopt regulations that supersedes an agency's specific regulations nor enlarge or diminish their authority. And the Council requested that -- important statute in law, the Board will have the capacity to implement intensive management on public lands.

If you'd like, we can go on and discuss each item.

1 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yeah, we could there,  
2 Donald.

3  
4 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, pardon? You want to go  
5 ahead and discuss intensive management or go to the next item  
6 -- we can go onto the next item and then come back and  
7 revisit each item.

8  
9 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I think Davey might want  
10 to say something about the muskrats.

11  
12 MR. MIKE: Okay, the comprehensive study of  
13 muskrat population, the Council requests a comprehensive  
14 study of muskrats on the Yukon Flats be conducted. The  
15 Council requested the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge to  
16 preserve funding to conduct a pilot study of total muskrat  
17 population in the Yukon Flats region. The muskrat population  
18 in the Yukon Flats is on decline and is a cause for concern,  
19 investigate the declining populations. Subsistence users  
20 rely on the muskrats as a subsistence resource and are  
21 concerned the muskrat population is decreasing.

22  
23 And finally, the last item on the annual  
24 report is the Yukon River Salmon Management Plan.

25  
26 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Davey -- Donald, we  
27 requested this last fall, this muskrat study because a lot of  
28 people depend on it. Is there anything followed up by the  
29 agencies or anything?

30  
31 MR. MIKE: From my understanding, I guess I  
32 misunderstood at the last meeting, that the Council requested  
33 to pursue funding through the Federal Subsistence Board. If  
34 that was not the case, you know, I can go back and do a  
35 follow-up.

36  
37 MR. JAMES: Donald, Mr. Chairman, maybe I'll  
38 relay this question to Craig, you were there at the Yukon  
39 Flats Fish and Game Advisory meeting, did they discuss  
40 anything about muskrat populations or implementing the plan  
41 there?

42  
43 MR. FLEENER: That question kind of catches  
44 me off guard because I don't remember them saying much about  
45 muskrat but I know it's been an issue of interest in the  
46 Yukon Flats for, it must be seven or eight years now. And  
47 fortunately the muskrat population is actually starting to  
48 come back, the numbers are still extremely low but the  
49 population is starting to come back a little bit. But we've  
50 been asking for some sort of a study to take place for quite

1 a while now and we haven't heard anything from anybody,  
2 nobody's taken a step to find anything out. I guess they  
3 were just, like everything, assuming it was in some sort of  
4 cycle and would rebound. But we felt the declines were over  
5 such a broad area of Alaska and part of Canada and happened  
6 so rapidly and happened in a way that hadn't happened in the  
7 memory of everyone that we could talk to in the Yukon Flats,  
8 that we thought it was worthwhile to look into. And so  
9 that's sort of the history of our interest in muskrat. But  
10 I don't know, nothing ever came about.

11  
12 And I think what I was hoping was that we put  
13 this in the annual report, just like we put studying the  
14 mortality of moose calves in there and I was sort of hoping  
15 that the Refuge would try to come up with some funding to  
16 study this like they studied the moose population but I don't  
17 know if the Refuge had pursued anything or even was  
18 interested at all in this type of an issue. I know I talked  
19 to the Refuge people a couple times in the past on it but I  
20 don't know if they've ever tried to get funding or put it  
21 into any type of an annual request for funding and just  
22 haven't gotten it. Have you guys done any of that Ted? It  
23 just seems like it would fit just like the calf mortality  
24 study, I mean if we have a problem within the Yukon Flats and  
25 we're putting a request through OSM, then it would probably  
26 end up falling in your lap.

27  
28 MR. HEUER: Good morning, Mr. Chairman. I  
29 wasn't familiar with this specific request. It has been an  
30 issue at several of the Yukon Flats Fish and Game Advisory  
31 Committee meetings. And Mark did spend some time doing a  
32 literature search on muskrat and I believe Paul talked to  
33 some of the elders about fluctuations in populations. And,  
34 you know, our preliminary evaluation that it's just a natural  
35 fluctuation, that these things happen to muskrat populations.

36  
37 To respond to your question, we didn't get  
38 any specific funding to do a muskrat study. If the Council  
39 recommended, you know, that we take an more in-depth look at  
40 muskrat and that we seek funding, we would follow up on that,  
41 but I'm not sure there's a lot we can do about muskrat  
42 populations to be honest. As long as the habitat is healthy  
43 and the marshes are healthy, there's not a lot you can do.  
44 But we could look at, you know, carcasses and look for  
45 diseases and that type of thing.

46  
47 MR. FLEENER: Well, it might be a little late  
48 for that since they're back on the rebound. But I wonder, in  
49 the literature review, what was the discussion in there about  
50 cycles or did you only hear that from the elder interviews?

1 MR. HEUER: I guess it's just typical of  
2 muskrat populations to be cyclic like that and I don't  
3 remember exactly what Mark said as far as the length of the  
4 cycle.

5  
6 MR. McCLELLAN: Mr. Chair, greg McClellan  
7 with Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge. I also know when  
8 Mark was doing the literature search that impacts of disease  
9 also was a cause of impacting in the cycling of muskrat  
10 populations was something that -- the specific details I  
11 don't remember. But I remember he found information on the  
12 disease would impact the populations and also there seemed to  
13 be a natural cycle of fluctuation.

14  
15 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Greg, how's the condition  
16 of the water where the muskrats are? Because I know muskrat  
17 needs good, clean water. Is there a lot of beaver located  
18 where these few muskrats are? The reason I'm asking is that  
19 a few of my elders are telling me why the muskrat population  
20 and resident specie population, and that's why some of them  
21 moose are sick is there are too many beavers in this country  
22 and they leave stagnant water and they leave all kinds of  
23 beaver fever in the streams.

24  
25 And one of our programs in Tanana Tribal  
26 Council, what we've been doing is killing them off and then  
27 blowing up the beaver dams in certain creeks just to get our  
28 whitefish population back. It has been working but we kind  
29 of ran out of funds in that department. But why I was asking  
30 if is because the muskrats need clean water and the beavers  
31 leave all kinds of -- they leave their sickness behind and  
32 that's what makes a lot of animals sick and that's what ruins  
33 a lot of resident species and I was just wondering if it has  
34 an adverse effect on the muskrats, too.

35  
36 MR. McCLELLAN: Mr. Chair, I'm not really  
37 familiar with the relationship between beaver and muskrat but  
38 I know that's also been a comment from folks on the Yukon  
39 Flats, that the beaver population has been increasing on the  
40 Yukon Flats in different areas for the last several years.  
41 The Refuge does try to do a annual beaver lodge survey.  
42 There's five areas that we try to do annually although it's  
43 dependent on weather and funding and so we haven't been doing  
44 it every year, but we've been doing it fairly regularly and  
45 those five areas that we've been surveying, the results have  
46 -- the total numbers have been pretty stable but in different  
47 areas there has been increase and decrease in the specific  
48 areas.

49  
50 And also another issue, on the Yukon Flats

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1 that has been brought up at this Council meeting and also  
2 Fish and Game Advisory Committee meetings and village  
3 meetings is the discussion of water quality and quantity on  
4 the Yukon Flats and the possible drying up of wetlands and we  
5 are looking into that. There is the scientist in Canada, the  
6 Old Crow Flats area that's trying to develop a protocol for  
7 monitoring wetlands using satellite imagery and so we've --  
8 Mark Berterm, again, has had contact with him to see how that  
9 is working and if that's something feasible we can try to do  
10 on the Flats. But we haven't done anything specifically on  
11 the Flats as far as, you know, trying to monitor the water in  
12 the wetlands.

13  
14 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I'd say that I'd like to  
15 see a direction from this Council towards your Refuge, that  
16 you do -- you put more into this study of muskrats because to  
17 some of our elders in our region it's a delicacy to have  
18 this. Even around Tanana, they miss it, the elders. And I  
19 go out to look for them every spring and I don't see them.  
20 But I would like to see your agency do more to do this, to  
21 study this subsistence food that we are being deprived of,  
22 maybe for certain reasons but I want to see more -- the next  
23 time we come to this table, I want to see more of an  
24 explanation of why this is happening.

25  
26 MR. HEUER: Mr. Chairman, I just might add  
27 that our fisheries resource office in cooperation with CATG  
28 has been looking at interactions between beaver and whitefish  
29 and they haven't summarized all that data yet but that report  
30 should be out fairly soon and basically what they're finding  
31 is that areas back behind beaver dams that contain ponds and  
32 stuff may be very important to whitefish in their young  
33 stages, early stages. So anyway, Craig may have something to  
34 add to that, I'm not sure when Randy's going to have that  
35 report out. But I was under the impression it would be  
36 pretty soon.

37  
38 MR. FLEENER: Well, we've got a draft done  
39 already so the final product is going to come pretty quickly.

40  
41 The beaver/whitefish project actually left us  
42 with more questions than it did answers so there's -- we  
43 think that in most places, the beaver dams are providing sort  
44 of an escape -- a place of escape and a place of feeding for  
45 young whitefish but it doesn't do much for big whitefish. If  
46 the big whitefish are back there they're going to eat all the  
47 little whitefish. So basically it's a place for the little  
48 whitefish to hide and go and eat and survive. But when high  
49 water comes they get flushed out if the water's high enough.  
50 But if the water doesn't get high enough and they don't get

1 flushed out and they can just get older and die in there  
2 actually. And if there's not enough fresh water flowing into  
3 a dammed up area, then it actually may be bad but as long as  
4 there is enough fresh water flowing into the place and  
5 there's a way for the water to get out, then it probably does  
6 good and it provides fish for people, they just have to work  
7 for it, meaning they have to go break the dams down.

8  
9 So it's kind of a mixed -- it can be good and  
10 it can be bad. But in most of the cases we think it's a  
11 pretty good thing.

12  
13 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, I guess I just need  
14 direction from the Council as far as the muskrat population  
15 is concerned, do you still want to go ahead and have our  
16 Staff in Anchorage do a follow-up on this matter?

17  
18 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yes.

19  
20 MR. MIKE: Okay. Mr. Chair, the last item on  
21 the annual report is basically the subsistence Upper Yukon  
22 River Salmon Management Plan, basically it mainly addressed  
23 subsistence needs that are not being met or are being met as  
24 far as the Upper Yukon areas concerns. So at the last  
25 meeting, I can't remember if there was a plan already in  
26 place or if this would be a new plan. Do you remember,  
27 George or Pete?

28  
29 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I think at the Board of  
30 Fish meeting and the last meeting that we had in Anchorage  
31 concerning the Upper River and the Lower River on the Yukon,  
32 is that, there's going to be restrictions on the Lower Yukon  
33 River that allow some to go by pulses and that will allow --  
34 to allow the first pulse and stuff to go through and they'll  
35 only target the second pulse but I don't know how that's  
36 going to be done in the Lower Yukon when the State is not  
37 going to be -- when the State is going to pullout of this co-  
38 management of managing the fisheries. But I'd sure like to  
39 see the Upper River people, especially in the Fort Yukon and  
40 Eagle area get some fish this year, even if there is no fish.  
41 But there's going to be a lot of restrictions put on the  
42 Lower River and in other areas, like Area M and other places,  
43 so that we could meet our needs. Because one of our first  
44 things here is that we have to protect the people that we  
45 represent, their subsistence needs, that they be met and  
46 that's one thing that I don't like to see, the State pulling  
47 away from this process. But it's just like a kid taking his  
48 candy away, that's what it looks like to me, if they can't  
49 play.....

1 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, I guess, basically at  
2 the last meeting the Council requested that the Fish and  
3 Wildlife Service or other agencies help develop an Upper  
4 Yukon River Salmon Management Plan and I guess basically we  
5 just need to see where do we need to get started from there,  
6 if that's the wishes of the Council.

7  
8 MR. JAMES: Mr. Chair.

9  
10 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Davey.

11  
12 MR. JAMES: I guess this is -- one of the  
13 main reasons this came out was a majority of the people  
14 between the Fish and Wildlife Advisory meeting in the past  
15 few years and the CATG natural resource meetings we've been  
16 having, a couple of discussions came out, is that, you know,  
17 we have never been meeting our needs there and one of the  
18 people last year was catching about 500 - about 300 fish and  
19 the next day he had to shut it down. And I'd like to, at  
20 this time, to thank the people in the Yukon Flats for abiding  
21 to the regulations. They shut their fish wheels, pull their  
22 fish nets out there and they did a really good -- they were  
23 really disappointed but they abide by the regulations that  
24 was set forth and it really hurt quite a few people.

25  
26 One of the discussions that came up was the  
27 sonar at the Rampart, what's it counting? They were  
28 wondering if it was counting all the fish that was going by,  
29 a majority of it? And Gary Lawrence brought up this idea, he  
30 said, why don't we find another system to where we can no for  
31 sure the people are meeting their needs and one of the ideas  
32 that he brought up was the community quota systems and that  
33 was a really good idea during the natural resource meeting we  
34 had last year, there was a lot of fish going by and the  
35 people were thinking maybe the sonar -- or the tagging --  
36 fish tagging -- fish wheel at Rampart wasn't really doing a  
37 hundred percent job that it was supposed to be doing. So  
38 since we catch a very small amount of the fish for  
39 subsistence use there, a community quota was kind of an idea  
40 that these people kind of liked there, and that's the idea  
41 that we want to put this into the Yukon River Salmon  
42 Management Plan; Craig can you work on this?

43  
44 I guess the other funding opportunity was  
45 maybe we could try to get in touch with the Yukon River  
46 Drainage Association. I think they have some proposals --  
47 they have some fundings from the Fish and Wildlife Service,  
48 that they're willing to work with the organizations and  
49 tribes.

50



1 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, I know that we've  
2 been talking a lot about an Upper Yukon River Salmon  
3 Management Plan just because of exactly what's been said  
4 here, the subsistence needs for several years in a row  
5 haven't been met, they haven't even been scratched really.  
6 And we sit on these YRDA teleconferences and we have people  
7 that are fishing at the mouth of the river telling us that we  
8 don't know how to fish, since we can't find the fish we don't  
9 know how to fish. And so the present management strategy has  
10 really got us pitted against each other. And you know,  
11 Gerald said that he thinks that there's going to be  
12 sufficient restrictions on fishing at the mouth this year but  
13 I thought I heard something about there being two 36-hour  
14 fishing periods on the first pulse but I might be wrong  
15 because I haven't been following it that closely. But, you  
16 know, if there's any opening on the first pulse, that's  
17 pretty much going to eliminate or maybe not eliminate, but  
18 severely restrict the amount of fish we get because according  
19 to what I've heard lately is that the fish we get are from  
20 the first pulse and those are the ones that are going into  
21 Canada to spawn. And so the more fishing that goes on in the  
22 early stages of the returns, the less we'll have on the  
23 spawning grounds which is supposed to be our first priority  
24 and the less we'll have for subsistence, which is our second  
25 priority. But it looks like I've got someone that wants to  
26 correct me on a few things.

27  
28 MR. KRON: Mr. Chairman, Tom Kron, Office of  
29 Subsistence Management. Craig, I am not here to correct you  
30 at all. I think you've got it exactly right. What the Board  
31 of Fish adopted was a schedule for the Yukon River as well as  
32 the coastal areas. And for the Lower Yukon River, the  
33 schedule is two 36-hour periods per week. And the way it was  
34 described was that the -- the feeling was that it in a normal  
35 kind of year this would allow people enough opportunity to  
36 get their needs. But again, I think everyone's recognizing  
37 that the run may, in fact, be worse than -- potentially worse  
38 than last year coming in so we're not looking at a normal  
39 kind of return and I think that, you know, this issue -- I  
40 think the plan was to discuss it in more detail tomorrow. We  
41 don't have a lot of the fisheries people here today. I know  
42 Monty Millard is planing to come over tomorrow and is  
43 prepared to give a presentation and I think Fish and Game  
44 will be here as well. So I think parts of this discussion,  
45 possibly, would be best deferred until tomorrow.

46  
47 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

48  
49 MR. FLEENER: Yeah, I guess we can save more  
50 of this discussion for tomorrow but I certainly think we need

1 to keep this in our annual report and I think we really have  
2 to demand -- you know, I don't know what a demand will do for  
3 us but I think we really need to demand an Upper Yukon River  
4 Salmon Management Plan, because, as has been pointed out,  
5 we're primarily subsistence users, I think we have a very  
6 small group of commercial fishermen that take very few fish  
7 and we need a plan that's going to meet subsistence needs and  
8 that means that somebody else is going to have to tighten  
9 their belt, I think. And when we have people at the mouth of  
10 the river that meet 100 percent of their subsistence needs  
11 almost every year and they meet a large percentage of their  
12 commercial needs, or even half of their commercial needs,  
13 they have commercial opportunity, we don't even have  
14 subsistence opportunity.

15  
16 And if escapement is our number 1 goal, we  
17 have got to start meeting escapement, and if subsistence is  
18 our second priority we've got to start meeting subsistence,  
19 and if commercial's our third priority, that means we need to  
20 shut commercial down in order to meet those subsistence needs  
21 and to meet our escapement needs and I'm not going to sit  
22 ideally by on a YRFDA teleconference anymore while somebody  
23 tells me go ask your elder where the fish are because you  
24 just don't know how to fish. The fact is there just weren't  
25 that many fish in the river. And so we have to put together  
26 a plan that meets the subsistence needs in the Upper Yukon  
27 and we can't just keep bowing to the demands of commercial  
28 fishermen. You know, something else has to be done, we've  
29 got to get our priorities straight. Or else let's change our  
30 priorities around and put subsistence on the bottom where  
31 it's really been managed for the last, I don't know how many  
32 years, and let's put escapement second, which is where it's  
33 been managed for a long time.

34  
35 Thanks.

36  
37 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chairman, that was the last  
38 item for the annual report. And do you have -- oh, sorry.

39  
40 MR. KRON: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Fleener, I guess  
41 a general comment, we'll get more into it tomorrow. But I  
42 think the expectation is that there will not be a commercial  
43 fishery next summer for one. And I think there was -- there  
44 was a lot of discussion at the Board of Fisheries meeting and  
45 I know a number of Regional Council members were able to come  
46 in for that but there was a lot of discussion about the need  
47 to distribute the allowable assistance harvest throughout the  
48 river so the people up river don't get shorted, for example.  
49 Again, there's a possibility, I think, next summer there  
50 won't be enough subsistence fish for everybody to meet their

1 needs, then the challenge is, how do you distribute them so  
2 that everybody gets a reasonable percentage? Everybody's got  
3 a reasonable opportunity.

4  
5 And I think, again, Monty intends to talk  
6 with us tomorrow about that, how to come up with a plan to  
7 accomplish that and I think definitely wants to get input  
8 from both the Western and Eastern Interior Regional Councils  
9 on their perspective as how to do that. The YK Regional  
10 Council meeting is next week so there'll be an opportunity to  
11 discuss it with them. But, again, the intent was to get a  
12 lot of input and perspective as to how exactly to go about it  
13 this year so we can have a fair approach. Again, provide for  
14 escapement first, but then to give everybody a fair shot at  
15 getting their subsistence needs.

16  
17 Thank you.

18  
19 MR. JAMES: Since we're talking about this  
20 salmon management plan there, I'd like to bring up one more  
21 item. I think since our counterparts are here, it would  
22 be a good time to discuss it and try to generate some support  
23 or not before bringing it up tomorrow, is that, the  
24 subsistence people are really getting hurt by not having a  
25 Yukon River and Canadian's negotiations treaty signed. And  
26 by not having that treaty signed, our subsistence people are  
27 being hurt, really. And I think we need to send a letter to  
28 the state of Alaska, Mary Peat, and to our negotiator, to  
29 proceed with this treaty negotiation there. Because the last  
30 three years, I know our people really got affected by this.  
31 I mean they shut our people down in the Yukon Flats and then  
32 the fish passed the sonar up at the border was reported that  
33 it was above the level and so since the Canadians -- one of  
34 the things I heard in Tanana at the Yukon River Drainage  
35 Association meeting before our meeting was that, since they  
36 didn't have no treaty with Alaska, they went ahead and opened  
37 up their commercial season and here they shut our subsistence  
38 people down. So we really need to get this treaty moving  
39 forward. It's being stalemated there.

40  
41 So if it's okay with the Council, if we can  
42 just send a letter to the appropriate people to proceed with  
43 this.

44  
45 Thank you.

46  
47 MR. KRON: Mr. Chairman, Mr. James, it's my  
48 understanding that there's plans to have a US/Canada  
49 negotiation session, the next one in Whitehorse the week  
50 after next and, again, that's coming up very close and Davey

1 is one of the delegates to that process and he hasn't heard  
2 anything about the meeting, I haven't heard anything about  
3 the meeting. It was discussed -- the negotiator from  
4 Washington D.C., State Department was at the Yukon River  
5 Drainage Association meeting in Holy Cross and gave a  
6 presentation there. There was discussion about how to  
7 prepare for the discussions with the Canadians but, again,  
8 I'm not sure if that meeting is going to happen or not.

9  
10 You know, I guess I agree with Davey that  
11 this is really important about, you know, we think that on  
12 average about half of the king salmon that are caught by  
13 fishermen in Alaska are actually produced from streams in  
14 Canada, so those spawning grounds are really important to  
15 Alaskans. About a quarter to a third of the chum salmon that  
16 are taken in Alaska by Alaskan fishermen are produced from  
17 streams in Canada. So it's real important that the two  
18 governments work together. The last negotiations were held  
19 here in Fairbanks last spring, in April, and there was a fair  
20 amount of progress made but there are still some hangups on  
21 the hardest parts and the hardest parts of the negotiations  
22 are basically the catch-sharing. How you share the catch.  
23 A lot of the other parts around the edges have been worked  
24 out but this is the hardest part that's left. I know that  
25 the Canadians want to wrap things up as well.

26  
27 We've been falling short on chinook salmon  
28 escapement in Canada the past three years.....

29  
30 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yeah, Tom, I think we'll  
31 hear about it tomorrow.

32  
33 MR. KRON: Thank you.

34  
35 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, that was the last item  
36 on the annual report unless we have any other comments to be  
37 included in the report.

38  
39 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, I have a comment,  
40 what date is this supposed to be submitted to the Subsistence  
41 Board?

42  
43 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, we can put that date  
44 either today or from the last meeting.

45  
46 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, if it's going to be  
47 submitted really soon, I think it would be good for us to add  
48 another sentence in here about the fact that the State has  
49 pulled out, you know, of working with us and I don't know  
50 exactly how to word it but the -- the dismay that I'm feeling

1 towards that happening.

2

3 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: It was one of the first  
4 things that when I first got on this Board and I figured --  
5 the first things that I seen was that the State and the  
6 Federal government would have to work together. I've been on  
7 this Board for four years or whatever but I always have been  
8 pushing for co-management and to see the State break off now,  
9 it's only going to hurt us. And me and Craig, we've been  
10 pushing for this for a long time. About every meeting we say  
11 something about it and I'd like to say we're very  
12 disappointed with them.

13

14 MR. FLEENER: Something else, too, Mr. Chair,  
15 I want to add to that is that, you know, I don't know how  
16 we're going to get through the summer, if they pull out and  
17 stay out of working with all of the Federal agencies on this  
18 co-management thing, how are we going to manage fish? How  
19 are we going to do this in-season management? You know, it's  
20 going to be pretty hard if they're not going to be willing to  
21 come to meetings or sit at the table, anything that cost them  
22 a penny or more, they're not going to be willing to  
23 participate in. And so as far as the memo goes, if it cost  
24 them money they're not going to do it. And so, to me, that's  
25 going to make managing fish a whole lot more problematic.

26

27 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, I'll go ahead and start  
28 writing up the concerns that the Council has about the State  
29 not participating in the annual report and I'll work with  
30 Craig on that.

31

32 MR. FLEENER: And Mr. Chair, if Donald could  
33 just -- he could work with me on putting that in there but if  
34 he cold just run that by you and not the whole Council and  
35 get that sent out as soon as possible, I think that would be  
36 good advice.

37

38 MR. MIKE: Agreed. Mr. Chair, that concludes  
39 the annual report section. The next thing on our agenda,  
40 agency reports and if there is agencies.....

41

42 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yeah, Donald, I was just  
43 going to ask the members that I have here, do you guys want  
44 to add anything to this annual report?

45

46 (Pause)

47

48 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Along with sending this  
49 letter, I'd like to have a different letter, not along with  
50 this but I'd like to have a letter coming from this Council

1 going to Frank Rue stating our disappointment in his pulling  
2 out, I mean him telling his agencies not to work along with  
3 us because of funding situations.  
4

5 MR. MILLER: Mr. Chair, we might also look at  
6 CC'ing a copy of that to the Governor considering he is  
7 pushing for all this co-management of tribes. And then to  
8 have Superintendent Monroe, you know, go against it, it just  
9 doesn't sit right with me.  
10

11 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, I understand that the  
12 Council's disappointment for the lack of the State's  
13 participation on the Council would be included in the annual  
14 report as well as sending a separate letter to Frank Rue.  
15

16 MR. FLEENER: Yes.  
17

18 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yes.  
19

20 MR. MIKE: Okay.  
21

22 MR. FLEENER: I can work with Donald on that  
23 as well, I got some good words I want to put in there.  
24

25 MR. FLEENER: Okay, Mr. Chair, if that  
26 concludes the annual report section we can move onto the next  
27 item on the agenda and what we have next is agency reports.  
28

29 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yeah, Donald, I'd like to  
30 take a five minute break before we go into agency reports.  
31 And it looks like the Office of Subsistence Management is the  
32 first one up.  
33

34 MR. MIKE: Yes, that's true. Unless we can  
35 -- the Office of Subsistence Management will have some more  
36 reports for tomorrow's meeting, too, during the joint meeting  
37 so maybe we can hold off.  
38

39 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: You're saying that they  
40 want to do their report tomorrow?  
41

42 MR. MIKE: That's what's on the agenda for  
43 the joint meeting tomorrow.  
44

45 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Okay, take a break.  
46

47 (Off record)  
48

49 (On record)  
50

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1 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I'll call the meeting  
2 back to order.

3  
4 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, we're at the item of  
5 agency reports and you can call on the Refuges or any other  
6 agencies.

7  
8 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yeah, we'll just go right  
9 down the list. The Office of Subsistence Management is going  
10 to give their report tomorrow in a joint session so we'll go  
11 down to Native corporations and regional or village or tribal  
12 councils. Is there anybody from regional village  
13 corporations or tribal councils that would like to say  
14 something?

15  
16 (Pause)

17  
18 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Then we'll go to Council  
19 of Athabaskan Tribal Governments. Do you want to say  
20 something there?

21  
22 MR. FLEENER: Yeah, Mr. Chair. I guess since  
23 I'm the only representative here from CATG, that -- I guess  
24 wasn't quite prepared for this but I can give a report on the  
25 Natural Resource Department, anyways, as far as CATG. We're  
26 working on a variety of different research projects, most of  
27 them in cooperation with one or another State or Federal  
28 agency. As was pointed out earlier, we're doing a couple of  
29 beaver/whitefish projects and we're working on several other  
30 projects.

31  
32 Of course, CATG is supporting me in my  
33 master's degree project, which is looking at the vegetation  
34 in the Yukon Flats to determine whether or not it's okay  
35 moose food and at nights I'm actually over here doing some  
36 analysis. So as soon as I leave here, I go stand up in the  
37 Fish and Game lab for four or five hours, you know, taking a  
38 look at the samples I've collected and I've been doing that  
39 each night while I've been here. And I've got some elder  
40 interviews to conduct yet, and the reason I'm conducting  
41 those interviews is to find out how they used to manage the  
42 moose population and how they think we should manage the  
43 moose population. I'm also going to look at success rates in  
44 the old days and compare that to success rates nowadays and  
45 basically just get an idea of what our elders think we should  
46 do with our moose population. That's one component of the  
47 study. Another component, of course, is looking at  
48 vegetation. And a third component is where I'll be modeling  
49 the moose population different types of changes, different  
50 types of management strategies and those strategies might

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1 include increasing moose numbers by harvesting more predators  
2 or it may incorporate some sort of habitat changes.

3  
4 By the looks of my research so far, I don't  
5 think we need to do much to habitat but it's probably always  
6 wise to include some sort of habitat work if you're going to  
7 do any sort of wildlife manipulation just because it -- even  
8 if you don't need it it makes people feel good so we'll  
9 probably end up incorporating that just because people don't  
10 want you to do anything to wildlife if you're not doing  
11 something to habitat first. And of course, there's always  
12 the human end of things, managing the way people hunt.

13  
14 So that's part of my thesis and I've got a  
15 lot of the data collected and I've been fortunate enough to  
16 work with CATG on this which has been a good supporter.

17  
18 Other projects we're working on with CATG, of  
19 course, we're always interested in environmental things that  
20 are going on around us. We've got a lot of small pollution  
21 problems and we've got some major pollution problems that  
22 we're concerned about and so we're trying to take a look at  
23 some of those pollution problems and how they're affecting  
24 our people. And one of the things we'd like to start getting  
25 into here really soon is looking at the influence of  
26 different types of pollution on wildlife and other wild foods  
27 and see how those, in turn, affect the people up there.  
28 Because there's people, you know, that are getting sick from  
29 all kinds of weird things that people never used to get sick  
30 from, at least, that's what I've been told. And you know,  
31 it's got to be coming from some new source so we're going to  
32 try to take a look at pollutants that are going into our wild  
33 food supply and seeing how they're affecting people and then  
34 trying to look for some sort of changes, how we can help  
35 people out by getting rid of some of these sources of  
36 pollution.

37  
38 We're always interested in any type of  
39 wildlife things that are going on. We work with Fish and  
40 Wildlife and Fish and Game on doing moose surveys, I think  
41 we're about to embark on wolf survey here pretty soon. We  
42 work on a lot of different projects but CATG's concern is  
43 with regional issues and we support the villages in the Yukon  
44 Flats, that's our goal anyways. If a community has an issue,  
45 we're there to support them in taking care of whatever their  
46 problem is. If it's finding funds or whatever. But as far  
47 as fish and game, we're, of course, very concerned that  
48 subsistence needs are met and we want to make sure that  
49 subsistence needs are met and so one of the ways we do that  
50 is by getting involved in management and we want to be as



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1 involved as we can in every facet of management and this is  
2 why we try to do cooperative agreements with Fish and Game  
3 and Fish and Wildlife Service and why we're interested in  
4 being involved in assuming a lot of management authority in  
5 the Yukon Flats area. And since we want to make sure that  
6 there's ample subsistence opportunity, a lot of times that  
7 means we have to get involved in research and so we're doing  
8 more and more research and hoping to continue to do more  
9 research and it's a lot easier for us to conduct research in  
10 the Yukon Flats than it is to bring some student from the  
11 University of Idaho up and let them work on a master's degree  
12 there, plus those don't happen often enough and there's a lot  
13 of things that need to be studied so we're working on  
14 building capacity and working with the tribes as much as we  
15 can. And if there's any way CATG can support this Council,  
16 you know, we're always available.

17

18 And unless there's any questions I'll close  
19 with that.

20

21 MR. JAMES: Craig, I have a question here.  
22 Maybe if you can tell the Chiefs that I mentioned this fact  
23 there that they can write a letter to support the subsistence  
24 people to the Canada and Alaska negotiations, to proceed,  
25 because it's really affecting the subsistence people in the  
26 Yukon Flats.

27

28 MR. FLEENER: Yes, I'll certainly relay that  
29 at the next CATG meeting, which is in two weeks and I think  
30 it's going to be in this building here so I'll be at that  
31 meeting and I can -- if there is other people here that would  
32 like to give some sort of report to CATG or to participate,  
33 I can't invite you because I'm not on the board but I'm  
34 certain if you ask the board, that they'd certainly allow you  
35 to participate in the meeting.

36

37 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, it looks like we can go  
38 on with the list. Tanana Chiefs, if there's a representative  
39 here to give a report or we can just move on down the list.

40

41 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I think the concern in  
42 Tanana Chiefs is that Steve Ginnis, kind of yesterday  
43 requested funding but considering that we already did go  
44 through our resource monitoring plans already these past few  
45 months it will have to come up in the next round for Steve.  
46 So I'll personally tell him that. I thought Stanley Ned was  
47 going to be here and say something but he's got other things  
48 to do, I guess, so we could just move on.

49

50 MR. MIKE: Okay, Mr. Chair, it looks like if

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1 there's any local villages or tribal councils out there.

2

3 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Here comes Stanley. You  
4 want to say something, Stanley -- yeah, Tanana Chiefs.

5

6 MR. FLEENER: Don't forget your notebook.

7

8 MR. NED: My name is Stanley Ned. I work for  
9 Tanana Chiefs as a staff researcher for wildlife and parks.  
10 I guess you all know Gabe Sam was working as the program  
11 director has now been released and I've now taken on some of  
12 the things that he was working on.

13

14 And basically what we're doing is we have a  
15 cooperative agreement with Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
16 to do non-salmon species studies on the Koyukuk River. We're  
17 also working on -- Gabe Sam was sitting on the migratory  
18 birds and so I don't really know what was going to happen  
19 with that but I attended the last meeting and we're waiting  
20 for a response back from the villages to see what's going to  
21 happen with that.

22

23 But other than that, I'm just going to take  
24 it day by day.

25

26 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Stanley, is there any way  
27 that you could work in conjunction with like CATG or any  
28 organization up there concerning the muskrat populations up  
29 there because you know a lot of people from like Stevens  
30 Village, Arctic, Beaver and Fort Yukon kind of miss eating  
31 muskrat and I was just wondering if TCC could work along with  
32 them or something like that.

33

34 MR. NED: If we receive some kind of  
35 direction from some of the villages to point us in that  
36 direction it would give us a directive to it, yes.

37

38 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Thank you.

39

40 MR. JAMES: Stan -- Mr. Chairman, as I  
41 referred to Craig and also a letter, to the Board of  
42 Fisheries, can you -- underneath your capacity refer this  
43 back to the Board of Directors for TCC is that is to send a  
44 letter stating that we need to get these negotiations ongoing  
45 -- up and going there with Canada and U.S., it's been  
46 stalling for 15 years now and it's really affecting the  
47 subsistence people along the Yukon River. I really believe  
48 that once we get this treaty signed with Canada, that will  
49 lift some of the burden up on the subsistence people there.  
50 And what I want is to generate some support there to the

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1 State agencies there to get this negotiations going there,  
2 back on the table.

3

4 Thank you.

5

6 MR. NED: As far as I know the State and the  
7 Feds are still negotiating with the Canadians. And as far as  
8 the State pulling out from fisheries, I don't know how --  
9 what kind of impact it's going to have on the negotiation  
10 development, I will find out.

11

12 MR. JAMES: Thank you.

13

14 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Thank you Stan. Is there  
15 anybody here from local village tribal council that would  
16 like to say something?

17

18 MR. JAMES: Mr. Chairman, this -- I don't  
19 know if Craig knows about this but I'd like to bring up that  
20 the Native Village of Fort Yukon and the City Council of Fort  
21 Yukon, two months ago passed a resolution opposing the  
22 fishery closures last fall, mainly because subsistence people  
23 never met their needs. And I don't know, Craig, if you've  
24 seen that resolution or not -- you did there -- and that's  
25 just for the record to let you guys know that.

26

27 They also passed another resolution that the  
28 negotiations between Alaska and Canada be put back on the  
29 table there because last fall, you know, the Canadians opened  
30 up their commercial fishing and we got shut down again. So  
31 it's really affecting the subsistence people there. So we  
32 really need to -- I just want to let you know on that from  
33 the Native Village of Fort Yukon.

34

35 Thank you.

36

37 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, the next item on the  
38 list is State of Alaska, Subsistence Division of Wildlife,  
39 Conservation Division, Commercial Fisheries and Sportfish  
40 Division; if there are any State people out there that would  
41 like to make a report otherwise we can go onto BLM.

42

43 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: We have one State here.

44

45 MR. FLEENER: Just one.

46

47 MR. BURR: I'm John Burr with Sportfish  
48 Division with Alaska Fish and Game. I was going to offer a  
49 short report on the Dall River, northern pike fishery.

50

1           As you are all aware we've been involved in  
2 a planning process for that fishery, trying to put together  
3 a fisheries management plan. The goal was to cooperatively  
4 develop a plan with Stevens Village and Fish and Game and the  
5 Refuge and the advisory committees, and up to this point it's  
6 worked out pretty well. We've had good participation from  
7 all the different groups. As a result of the data needs that  
8 were identified during that planning process, we launched a  
9 project at the Dall River that we've reported on before. The  
10 Dall River portion of that project is pretty much going to be  
11 wrapped up this summer. The notion was, do these fish stay  
12 in the Dall River area so that if we establish special  
13 regulations for the Dall River would they be effective, and  
14 then the other part of it was to establish what the age and  
15 size composition looked like for that population.

16  
17           As a result of of this study and from the  
18 process we've put in some proposals to modify the regulations  
19 for the sportfishery in the Dall River and the Board of Fish  
20 adopted those changes so we have a much more restrictive set  
21 of regulations for the Dall River sport fishery including a  
22 no-bait restriction, no more set lines are allowed in the  
23 area and primarily a catch and release fishery for large  
24 fish. We had real good support and cooperation with Stevens  
25 Village. They've been very involved in the field portions of  
26 the project and in this planning process.

27  
28           Anyway, we have been funded through the  
29 Federal Subsistence Board, with Stevens Village to continue  
30 work on northern pike in the Yukon Flats area and we will get  
31 that one started in May or June in the next drainage upstream  
32 from Stevens Village and the goal here is to look at how fish  
33 that are spawning in this upper portion are affecting or  
34 contributing or not contributing to these fish that are  
35 targeted by sport fishermen and by subsistence fishermen in  
36 the area.

37  
38           And that's all I was going to report on at  
39 this time. It's my understanding that the agenda identifies  
40 tomorrow morning as the time to talk about a lot of the other  
41 fisheries issues in the Yukon drainage, both in the Eastern  
42 and Western Interior. I anticipate being back at that time  
43 and I also expect that we'll have some more fisheries staff  
44 here tomorrow morning.

45  
46           MR. JAMES: Mr. Chairman, a question there.  
47 John, gee, I've been thinking about you for about a week now.

48  
49           (Laughter)

50

1 MR. JAMES: And the reason I've been thinking  
2 about you is the catch and release methods, does it really  
3 help the populations of the fish there by catching and  
4 releasing it? Does the fish actually survive? Are there any  
5 studies done? Because the issue came about, the hooks really  
6 gets into the gills of the fish there and once you release  
7 them and you catch them again and you release them, are there  
8 any studies done, what's the percentage that survive after  
9 catching them and releasing them?

10  
11 MR. BURR: Yeah, Davey. There actually have  
12 been quite a few studies, particularly with northern pike.  
13 And what almost all the studies find is that the catch and  
14 release mortality rate, if you catch a fish the chances of it  
15 living are -- or actually dying is about -- in all of the  
16 studies that they've done, it's always been less than 10  
17 percent and in many instances where there's been an attempt  
18 to treat the fish really well, it's less than five percent,  
19 usually three or four percent. Without question, if the fish  
20 gets hooked deep down in its stomach or if it gets hooked in  
21 the eye or in the gills where the gills are bleeding, those  
22 fish, by and large, don't survive. So a really important  
23 part of catch and release fishing is proper gear type and  
24 then good handling techniques. But of all the different  
25 kinds of fish in the state of Alaska, pike are probably more  
26 able to put up with catch and release fishing than anything  
27 else. You don't have to quite cut their heads off and hide  
28 it to kill them but they're pretty tough.

29  
30 So, yes, it's been demonstrated in a number  
31 of cases that a catch and release regulation for a northern  
32 pike sportfishery is an effective way to maintain the large  
33 older age fish in the population. So, yeah, we're pretty  
34 confident in the case of northern pike that it's a good  
35 effective way to help conserve the stock.

36  
37 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, I got a follow-up  
38 question. You said that if proper gear type is used and  
39 proper fishing techniques then about less than 10 percent  
40 will die. How many people are using proper gear types and  
41 does proper gear types including cutting barbs off?

42  
43 MR. BURR: In this particular fishery, I  
44 think most people are using proper gear types, particularly  
45 now that we've put the no-bait restriction on, that reduces  
46 that probability that the fish are going to swallow the gear  
47 really deep. As far as barbs or not barbs, a lot of people  
48 prefer not to use barbs but every time they've tried to do an  
49 experience to demonstrate whether barbs were either better or  
50 worse, there's been no difference in any of the results that

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1 I'm aware of. So although it makes it a lot easier to let  
2 the fish go, and I prefer to fish that way myself, there's no  
3 scientific information that demonstrates that it's necessary.

4  
5 MR. FLEENER: Thanks.

6  
7 MR. JAMES: John, is this true with grayling?

8  
9 MR. BURR: Yeah, actually grayling put up  
10 with catch and release fishing pretty well also. The  
11 mortality statistic is a little bit higher for grayling by  
12 and large than it is for pike. But grayling put up with it  
13 pretty well. Probably the fish species that likes it the  
14 least may be sheefish, you have to be more careful with  
15 sheefish than with some of the other species of fish. But  
16 again, with proper handling techniques and a well educated  
17 fisherman, catch and release fishing is a pretty effective  
18 way to maintain a portion of the stock if there's going to be  
19 this kind of activity.

20  
21 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: All right, thank you,  
22 John. It looks like this next subject that's up is BLM, and  
23 since we're going to be meeting with Western tomorrow and it  
24 seems like if we want to hear it twice -- I'll leave it up to  
25 my Board here, you just want to hear it tomorrow?

26  
27 MR. FLEENER: What's that, BLM?

28  
29 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yeah.

30  
31 MR. FLEENER: Why would they speak again  
32 tomorrow?

33  
34 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Because it's here, it's  
35 on this agenda and it's on the agenda for Western and Eastern  
36 Interior.

37  
38 MR. JAMES: Mr. Chairman, I think the last  
39 three times we've been getting her up here and we've been  
40 postponing her and I think since she's here we might as well  
41 listen to her.

42  
43 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Okay.

44  
45 MR. JAMES: Thank you.

46  
47 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Go ahead, Ruth.

48  
49 MS. GRONQUIST: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members  
50 of the Council. Well, I don't have much to say and I will be

1 here tomorrow but also another biologist will be here who  
2 will speak to different issues and probably most of what I  
3 have to tell you is just for the Eastern Interior. Most of  
4 the things that we're concerned about, you've already  
5 addressed yesterday. So basically I'm just here if you have  
6 any questions today.

7

8 Thank you.

9

10 MR. FLEENER: Nice hearing from you.

11

12 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, the next item on the  
13 agenda is Fish and Wildlife Service and OSM is on the list  
14 again, so that will be discussion for tomorrow. But if  
15 there's any Refuges out there that'd like to make a  
16 presentation to the Council they can do so.

17

18 MR. McCLELLAN: Yes, Mr. Chair, my name is  
19 Greg McClellan, subsistence coordinator for Yukon Flats and  
20 Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. And I have a report that's  
21 fairly specific to Eastern Interior issues on both Refuges  
22 and I also have here Paul Williams, Refuge information  
23 technician for Yukon Flats. I guess we can start with Yukon  
24 Flats. Yesterday morning I handed out a hardcopy of the  
25 report to everybody and if they still have them or if it's  
26 been misplaced I have extra copies. I just put it under the  
27 meeting booklet in your place yesterday. I'll just kind of  
28 summarize a few quick things on that report.

29

30 As far as the moose population, the Refuge  
31 did complete a moose population survey 25(D) west last fall.  
32 The density estimate from that survey was .36 moose per  
33 square mile and in the material I handed out there was a  
34 figure that shows for the density estimate from '92, '96, '99  
35 and surveys in 2000 that show it's varied between .3 and .44  
36 moose per square mile. So still a very low moose population.

37

38 And as Craig mentioned in his report, we've  
39 been working cooperatively with CATG and last fall the Refuge  
40 transferred \$5,000 to CATG to help with costs for conducting  
41 a moose population survey of 25(D) east. And as Craig also  
42 mentioned in his master's project, the Refuge is also trying  
43 to look at collecting information on moose habitat and  
44 currently the two biologist from the Refuge are out on the  
45 Refuge collecting willow twigs between Stevens Village and  
46 Beaver, also working with folks from ADF&G and U.S. Forest  
47 Service on that.

48

49 And the last thing is the Staff from our  
50 ecological services office had put in a proposal to look at

1 contaminants in salmon in the Yukon and Kuskokwim River and  
2 that project got funded. It's going to be a one year project  
3 and they'll be collecting 20 chinook and 20 chum from Bethel,  
4 Tanana and Beaver and analyzing them for an extensive list of  
5 contaminants. On the report I listed the two biologists that  
6 will be doing the study and either themselves or the Refuge  
7 at the fall meeting will be able to give the preliminary  
8 results from that.

9  
10 So I'll open it up for any questions on any  
11 of that material.

12  
13 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Craig, why was it just  
14 requested for one year for this contaminant study on the  
15 Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers.

16  
17 MR. McCLELLAN: I'm not sure why when the  
18 proposal was put in it was just put in for one year, but I  
19 could find out. I don't know right now but I could find out  
20 and report to you later.

21  
22 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: From the past history of  
23 seeing studies being done and stuff, is that, one year of  
24 gathering information on any subjects for species that we  
25 deal with, it's better to be -- instead of one year I'd like  
26 to see studies being done for two or three years so we could  
27 get some kind of information, decrease or increase or does it  
28 stay the same; that's what I'd like to see.

29  
30 MR. McCLELLAN: That's a very good point.

31  
32 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, I have a question  
33 for Greg. The black bear study you guys have done, have you  
34 been able to or will you be able to, from the information  
35 you've got, come up with a population estimate for 25(D)  
36 east? I think that's where the study was in, right,  
37 primarily the east?

38  
39 MR. McCLELLAN: It's in the area near Birch  
40 Creek and the purpose of the study is more to determine home  
41 range areas and information on reproduction. It was not  
42 really designed to collect population estimates, so I don't  
43 believe that that can be developed from the study.

44  
45 MR. FLEENER: And you guys haven't been bold  
46 enough to even make a guess at what the black bear population  
47 would be like from -- because you guys did -- you guys had  
48 your foot snares out for -- what was it, about 20 days or  
49 something like that and you had -- did you have recaptures of  
50 the same bears? And if you did, I think you should be able



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1 to come up with some sort of a population estimate, at least  
2 for that area, if you had recaptures of the same bears. And,  
3 of course, if you caught new bears, but I could be wrong.

4  
5 MR. McCLELLAN: Yeah, Craig. Yeah,  
6 definitely -- there were recaptures and if I'm remembering  
7 correctly, it was within a one or two square mile area, they  
8 did catch 22 different bears. I'll check with Mark if  
9 there's any way to get a population estimate for just that  
10 specific area or if it could be expanded. But like I said,  
11 I'm not aware that -- I know Mark hasn't developed any  
12 information like that as of yet.

13  
14 MR. FLEENER: And another question, I know  
15 that Fish and Wildlife Service has said that they've been  
16 sort of carrying an ongoing -- I don't know what steps you  
17 guys are at or what you've taken, but an ongoing look at  
18 bison reintroduction, I was wondering if you had any sort of  
19 an update, we haven't had an update from you guys in quite a  
20 while. What you've learned, what's been talked about. But  
21 I know that in talking with George and Ted that you guys have  
22 had an ongoing, although, maybe not in-depth, an ongoing look  
23 at the bison reintroduction.

24  
25 Grab a chair behind you, Ted. And this will  
26 be a plaguing issue so you might as well include it in your  
27 reports for us at least once a year.

28  
29 MR. HEUER: Yes, Mr. Chairman. We have a  
30 committee set up to look at the potential -- we have a  
31 committee set up and it's meeting periodically to review new  
32 information. We recently got Bob's final copy of the report  
33 that they published. That was disseminated to all members  
34 and we haven't had a meeting since that time.

35  
36 We'd seen the report in draft and, you know,  
37 I haven't really seen anything in the report that is going to  
38 change the Fish and Wildlife Service's position on the  
39 introduction. Basically, you know, we have a mandate to  
40 conserve fish and wildlife species and populations and  
41 habitats in their natural diversity. And when you do that on  
42 an area the size of the Yukon Flats or any of the Refuges in  
43 Alaska, you're basically trying to maintain natural processes  
44 and natural functions like the natural role of fire in the  
45 environment or natural water levels. And we recognize that  
46 ecosystems changes and evolve over time and I think some of  
47 the work that you've done, Craig, would, you know, indicate  
48 that the elders are saying that things have changed quite a  
49 bit just in their lifetimes. Nobody really knows why bison  
50 disappeared from the Yukon Flats. You know, if you go back

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1 far enough we used to have elk, we had horses, we had sheep,  
2 we had rhinoceroses, lions and a lot of different species.

3

4 MR. FLEENER: Yeah, but most of those species  
5 really don't exist on the planet anymore. We don't have a  
6 choice of reintroducing those. We don't have a choice of  
7 bringing them back from the endangered species list. We  
8 don't have a choice of bringing back the short-faced bear or  
9 any of these other animals. But if there were 50 of them  
10 that were living somewhere and we had the opportunity to try  
11 to get this animal off the endangered species list, if we had  
12 the choice to get this animal off the threatened list, of  
13 course, you know as well as I do it's not listed in the  
14 States here but it's listed in Canada, and this is range  
15 where the animals used to live and according to our elders  
16 they were here, you know, maybe a hundred years ago or so.  
17 And so, you know, I think that to use rhinoceros and those  
18 sorts of things as an examples of other animals, we can't  
19 help those animals, you know, they no longer exist. But the  
20 wood bison does exist and it existed here in fairly large  
21 numbers. It existed here not too long ago. And to not help  
22 it, I think would be is -- it's not natural.

23

24 But go ahead. I didn't mean to cut you off  
25 but I wanted to make sure that we don't classify a wood bison  
26 the same way we would classify the North American lion.

27

28 MR. HEUER: Sure. I was just making a point  
29 there that ecosystems do change and nobody really knows why  
30 bison disappeared from the Yukon Flats. And our policy is  
31 that if a species disappears because of natural environmental  
32 change then we don't do reintroductions.

33

34 MR. FLEENER: Let me say one more thing here,  
35 Ted, that I don't -- I hate the idea that we keep saying that  
36 nobody has an idea when they disappeared, we have really good  
37 ideas. We have carbon dates of when -- at least when the  
38 most recent ones were in Alaska and in the Yukon Flats, so we  
39 have a general idea with those dates. We have oral histories  
40 which anthropologists will tell you, they don't hang on in  
41 detail for thousands of years, and so we have a really good  
42 idea that bison were here fairly recently. Now, as George  
43 may argue and you may argue, we don't know the exact location  
44 of this information but we -- I think George said it one time  
45 that he talked to some people in some surrounding areas,  
46 maybe in Yukon or something like that, in other places in  
47 Alaska and there were no stories about bison but there are  
48 stories from the Yukon Flats about bison, so you know one of  
49 your arguments may be that the information is -- and I know  
50 it isn't one of your discussion points because you and I have

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1 discussed it, but that, the information may be from somewhere  
2 else but we don't have that same information coming to us  
3 from somewhere else. We don't have 10 elders from Old Crow  
4 saying there were bison here 200 years ago, we don't have all  
5 those sorts of information coming from Dawson or from other  
6 places. We have elders in the Yukon Flats and in some other  
7 places close to the Yukon Flats saying there were bison on  
8 the Yukon Flats not too long ago and we have detailed  
9 information, which not being an anthropologist, I can't speak  
10 for them but having spoken to several anthropologist, that  
11 they say detailed information doesn't last too long. And I  
12 don't know what -- if George wants to say anything about that  
13 but -- I guess we have several anthropologist out there and  
14 I'm certainly not one. But what I've heard is that detailed  
15 information doesn't last too long and so I think we could  
16 narrow it down to say bison were here not too long ago. And  
17 especially if we're looking at radio carbon dates, which are  
18 not that old either.

19

20 So go ahead.

21

22 MR. HEUER: Again, you know, one of the big  
23 issues for us is why they disappeared, not just when they  
24 were here. You know, we're trying to manage the Yukon Flats  
25 National Wildlife Refuge for the long-term, you know, what do  
26 we want it to look like 50 years from now, 100 years from  
27 now, 200 years from now. And we want a place where natural  
28 processes have prevailed. You know, when you manage for  
29 natural diversity you don't draw a line in the sand as of  
30 December 2nd, 1980 when the Refuge was established and say,  
31 we're going to keep everything exactly like it is because  
32 pretty soon you'd have a pretty unnatural system. So you  
33 have to allow for evolution to take place.

34

35 MR. FLEENER: I think actually we have been  
36 managing based on drawing a line in the sand. People came to  
37 this continent, you know, whenever they came here and they  
38 looked at something and they said this is how this country's  
39 supposed to look and that's how they managed it. I really  
40 don't think people have let the systems take over. We've  
41 been actively managing, which means, we've been removing  
42 animals, we've been replacing animals, we've been cutting  
43 trees, we've been stopping fire, we've been letting fire go,  
44 we've been controlling where fire goes, we've been building  
45 fire breaks, we've been an active manager in the way our  
46 country looks. It probably doesn't look anything like it  
47 looked when we first got here but because we've been in  
48 control of managing it and if you look take a look at a lot  
49 of the national parks around the country, they're in big  
50 trouble because they're being managed to try to preserve what

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1 people think they're supposed to look like instead of letting  
2 them go, you know, and a good example of that is big fires  
3 taking off. And I think we've learned a lesson there by  
4 having that attitude. And so to say that we're going to try  
5 to maintain things in their natural diversity when we are  
6 controlling part of that diversity but not other parts of the  
7 diversity, I think it's almost impossible to try to have that  
8 as a goal.

9  
10 If you're going to leave something alone then  
11 you leave it alone and you don't control anything. If you're  
12 not going to leave it alone then you're not going to leave it  
13 alone.

14  
15 So I think it's a good concept, managing  
16 things in their natural diversity but we're changing -- we're  
17 constantly changing things and people, wherever they've  
18 existed have always changed things. And people that have  
19 lived on the land have changed things on the land for  
20 thousands of years to their benefit and to wildlife's  
21 benefit. As Paul was mentioning earlier, you know, we've  
22 been active participants in managing the landscape and we  
23 learn from trial and error. And so people have manipulated  
24 habitats for thousands and thousands of years, here and in  
25 Europe, Asia, everywhere, and a lot of times those benefitted  
26 the species around them. And I'm sure that everything man  
27 does isn't necessarily bad. And so, you know, this concept  
28 of managing things in their natural diversity where we  
29 pretend we're leaving things alone, I think, is a good --  
30 it's good to tell the people in the Lower 48 because that's  
31 what they want to hear but I don't think it's truly accurate.  
32 And I'm not really jumping you, I'm jumping the statement of  
33 managing things in their natural diversity because I think  
34 it's a very tricky concept and it gives people, somewhere, an  
35 idea that we're leaving things alone when really we're not.  
36 And to use that argument for keeping wood bison out of an  
37 area where they existed not too long ago, where we could be  
38 helping them get off the endangered species list or the  
39 threatened part of the endangered species list and where we  
40 could be providing an alternate food source to people where  
41 the species that are important to us are gone because we  
42 haven't been managing salmon in their natural diversity and,  
43 you know, providing other opportunities for people to maybe  
44 make a living, I think, maintaining the idea of managing in  
45 their natural diversity is hurting us in this case and I  
46 think we need to look somewhere else.

47  
48 We can manage, you know -- we're not managing  
49 the two species that are most important to us, foodwise, in  
50 their natural diversity, so why would we use that as a reason

1 to keep bison out when that could really help the people in  
2 the Yukon Flats and help the species itself in long-term  
3 recovery?

4

5 MR. HEUER: First of all, I guess I would say  
6 that we are trying to manage things in their natural  
7 diversity, including and I'm assuming you're talking about  
8 moose and salmon, you know, we all know those species occur.  
9 The natural components of the habitat, fire and flooding,  
10 things like that, we monitor those habitats for contaminant  
11 levels for -- you know, we monitor the wildlife populations.

12

13 But you know this introduction, it really  
14 goes back to whether, you know, bison belong on the Yukon  
15 Flats and they've been gone for a long time. You know, you  
16 mentioned radio carbon dates, I think the most recent date we  
17 have on the Yukon Flats is over a thousand years ago.

18

19 MR. FLEENER: Don't fail to mention the  
20 recent data in Anchorage, though.

21

22 MR. HEUER: Yeah, there was a recent date in  
23 Anchorage a couple hundred years ago, it was 450 and that's  
24 been reevaluated and it's more recent than that. But, you  
25 know, they've been gone a long time. We are still evaluating  
26 this proposal. We don't see any reason to rush into it.

27

28 MR. FLEENER: As we see. We started in 1991  
29 and we certainly haven't rushed into it.

30

31 MR. HEUER: Yeah, it's been 10 years now that  
32 we've been talking about this.

33

34 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yeah, we seem to be  
35 rambling on here about this bison. We did go through a lot  
36 of it. And one thing about natural diversity, is that, you  
37 guys are letting beaver go. If you let them go, they block  
38 streams, they poison water, they make stagnant stuff and you  
39 guys need to deal with that. I don't a response for that but  
40 let's move on.

41

42 MR. JAMES: Ted, I got two questions -- or  
43 Greg, on your report there. I see you give \$5,000 to CATG  
44 and I want to thank you there for recognizing the capacity of  
45 the natural resource department in CATG there and I hope all  
46 the village organizations can see this as a positive co-  
47 management with the tribes and with the agencies.

48

49 My other question here is, a few years ago  
50 you guys did a mortality study on calves and cows by the

1 brown bears down around Beaver and there was a high  
2 percentage of mortality. What was your recommendation -- did  
3 you do any recommendations on trying to cut down the  
4 mortality in that report there?

5

6 MR. HEUER: Yeah, thanks Davey. The report  
7 that we did really didn't have any management recommendations  
8 in it. We were just kind of looking at the cause of the  
9 mortality and we would hope that that would be one of the  
10 issues that will be addressed by the moose management  
11 planning committee, that that will be one of the pieces of  
12 information they look at when they're making recommendations  
13 on how to manage moose. You know, basically what we found  
14 was that 20 percent of the calves were surviving for the  
15 first year and major causes of mortality were black bear and  
16 grizzly bears. The first year it was largely black bears,  
17 the second year it was pretty equally split between black  
18 bears and grizzly bears. But, you know, certainly if more  
19 bears were taken from the area you would assume that you'd  
20 have a higher survival rate of calves.

21

22 MR. JAMES: I think this question, Craig, you  
23 need to bring up again at the next natural resource meeting  
24 there with the tribes and villages is that, this would help  
25 the subsistence people. You can -- for economic reasons, you  
26 know, if we can develop a buffer zone for brown bears,  
27 certain creeks where there's a large amount of population of  
28 brown bears that's taking an affect on the moose, would you  
29 support that proposal, if there's ever a proposal that does  
30 come through here? And the other question is that we really  
31 need to get -- you know, we need to help the subsistence  
32 people to get into guiding services, even though a lot of  
33 them don't like guiding services, but to tap into that market  
34 there so that would help them.

35

36 So thank you.

37

38 MR. HEUER: You know, we would be glad to  
39 support local guiding opportunities. Basically big game  
40 guiding is something that's -- you know, there's State  
41 permits required for that. There's also a Refuge permit. If  
42 a person had the necessary State permits then we would be  
43 glad to consider them for guiding on the Refuge. We have two  
44 guide areas that open periodically, like once every five  
45 years.

46

47 As far as a buffer zone, you know, we've  
48 already supported pretty liberal seasons on bears throughout  
49 the Flats. I don't know that we could get much more liberal.  
50 We'd never support some zone where you'd want to eliminate

1 all bears, at least on the Refuge. Does that answer your  
2 question?

3

4 MR. FLEENER: You mean you don't want to see  
5 a 30 mile wide buffer zone?

6

7 (Laughter)

8

9 MR. FLEENER: But I'll answer Davey, too,  
10 I'll definitely take that back to the natural resource  
11 department and work with people about talking about those  
12 issues that you raised.

13

14 MR. JAMES: Thank you.

15

16 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, can I ask one more  
17 questions on bears, are you guys planning on conducting this  
18 -- the black bear study you did in other areas? I'm really  
19 interested in finding out what the bear population really is.  
20 And we pretty much are just guessing based on a couple of  
21 studies that have been done in other areas of Alaska and  
22 we're using that information which is really not that  
23 accurate and it's really hard to count bears anyways. I'm  
24 wondering if you guys have made any plans to do a bear  
25 population estimate in the Yukon Flats and, if not, I know  
26 we've talked about it before, I think it's going to be one of  
27 the components missing in overall management scheme for  
28 moose, is understanding how many bears are there.

29

30 And so this genetics study has proven itself  
31 to be a fairly effective way to estimate bear populations and  
32 have you guys considered working on something like that and,  
33 if so, then we should consider developing a joint proposal to  
34 where we can work together on something like that.

35

36 MR. HEUER: Yeah, Craig, to respond to your  
37 question, we have considered it. We don't have anything in  
38 the words right now as far as hunting goes. You may have  
39 talked to Mark a little bit about the DNA work, I mean that's  
40 something we'd like to have, too, is good population estimate  
41 and we'd be glad to work with you guys on a cooperative  
42 project of some sort.

43

44 MR. FLEENER: Well, if we were to develop a  
45 proposal through your office there, what's the funding cycle  
46 that we would need to work on and when would you guys  
47 actually have time to do it?

48

49 MR. HEUER: We usually submit our budget  
50 requests in August and that would be for the following fiscal

1 year starting in October. But we usually don't actually know  
2 our funds until later in the fiscal year. Like I still  
3 haven't gotten my budget yet for this year and we're getting  
4 close to halfway through the year. So it would be next year  
5 at the earliest before we could start it, not this summer but  
6 the following summer, before we could start something.

7

8 MR. FLEENER: But the proposal would be  
9 submitted this August and we would know next year when the  
10 funding would come through?

11

12 MR. HEUER: Yeah. You know, if there was  
13 something that we could do, you know, we might be able to  
14 start something this year, small scale with, you know, some  
15 Refuge funds that we could make available from someplace  
16 else. But we wouldn't have a lot of money to do it.

17

18 MR. FLEENER: Thanks, Ted.

19

20 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Go ahead, Greg.

21

22 MR. McCLELLAN: I guess to move on to Arctic  
23 Refuge, there's a handout there for activities on the Arctic  
24 Refuge. Just a couple highlights. Currently there's staff  
25 from Arctic Refuge in cooperation with staff from ADF&G and  
26 the Yukon Department of Renewable Resources attempting to  
27 capture and fit about 45 caribou from the porcupine herd with  
28 conventional radio collars. It's similar to a capture  
29 project that was completed last year near Arctic Village.

30

31 This winter there's been very few caribou  
32 that have wintered near Arctic Village. This winter the vast  
33 majority of the population has been wintering in Canada this  
34 year. And the plan is to do a photo census of the Porcupine  
35 Caribou Herd this year. The last census was completed in  
36 '98. And also last fall in November, after the -- since the  
37 last meeting, the Refuge did conduct an aerial moose survey  
38 of the Eastern Brooks Range and the area was last surveyed in  
39 '91 when a total of 122 moose were counted. The results from  
40 this year found only 308 moose within the same area surveyed  
41 in '91 so there has been a decrease in that population,  
42 although the reason for the decrease is not known.

43

44 And I guess the next area I want to bring up  
45 is that at the meeting in Tanana, Council member Davey James  
46 had requested information on the registered guide use on the  
47 Refuge and in the material I handed out there was a table  
48 showing the number of animals that have been harvested by  
49 clients of guides within the guide areas for the last three  
50 years, '98, '99, 2000 and it's broken down to those guide



1 areas that are south of the Continental Divide and north of  
2 the Continental Divide. And then there's also a map of the  
3 Refuge showing the 20 guide areas differentiated.

4

5 So I'd be happy to try to answer any  
6 questions on that information.

7

8 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Any questions Davey.

9

10 MR. JAMES: I'd just like to thank you for  
11 following up on that information that I requested. Thanks a  
12 lot.

13

14 MR. McCLELLAN: You're welcome.

15

16 MR. FLEENER: Hey, Greg, while you're talking  
17 about ANWR, I wonder if Joanne would like to come up and sit  
18 next to you since she's working on ANWR, it'd be nice for  
19 everybody to meet her and also hear, if you guys don't mind,  
20 what she's been up to and what her goals are for taking over  
21 ANWR herself.

22

23 MS. GUSTAFSON: My name is Joanne Gustafson.  
24 I'm currently from Arctic Village. I'm a senior at  
25 University of Alaska-Fairbanks pursuing a degree in natural  
26 resources management and rural development. And while I'm in  
27 school I'm currently doing an internship at Arctic National  
28 Wildlife Refuge as a park ranger. And we just submitted a  
29 grant to do fisheries and TEK, which is traditional  
30 ecological knowledge for Old John Lake and I want to thank  
31 you for approving that. And I'll be the head principal for  
32 the tradition and knowledge portion of the grant so I'm kind  
33 of looking forward to that. But that's kind of my job at the  
34 Refuge.

35

36 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, thank you, Joanne.  
37 When do you think you'll graduate?

38

39 MR. GUSTAFSON: I'm looking at another  
40 semester. I was in the step-program for about a year and a  
41 half and recently I've just gone to a skip-program. I get  
42 confused with these two programs. But I was an intermittent  
43 student and now I'll be going in full-time, permanent.

44

45 MR. JAMES: Greg, I have one question. Have  
46 the tribes of Venetie and Arctic Village expressed any  
47 interest in doing a moose survey on their land?

48

49 MR. McCLELLAN: Not that I'm aware of. I  
50 don't know if Joanne could -- if she's heard any comment from

1 Arctic Village or Venetie about doing a moose survey on  
2 tribal lands.

3  
4 MS. GUSTAFSON: We gave authorization to do  
5 a caribou survey but I'm not aware of a moose survey.

6  
7 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, yeah, Davey, I was  
8 at Venetie not too long ago at a CATG meeting and I know that  
9 there was discussion there about interest in doing a moose  
10 survey, at least, on the lower part of the reservation.

11  
12 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Anything else.

13  
14 MR. JAMES: I have one more question. At the  
15 last meeting in Tanana I brought up -- you know, are you guys  
16 -- I know Paul is doing a good job with the community in  
17 Yukon Flats there, are you guys planning on recruiting for  
18 another RITC or.....

19  
20 MR. FLEENER: RIT.

21  
22 MR. JAMES: .....RIT for Arctic and Yukon  
23 Flats?

24  
25 MR. McCLELLAN: Yes, Davey. Yeah, first for  
26 Yukon Flats, yeah, it is our intention of hiring a second RIT  
27 in conjunction with Paul. As Ted mentioned earlier, we have  
28 yet to receive our budget for this fiscal year but we will  
29 assume that we'll have enough money and do plan to hire a  
30 second RIT. Another hold up on that is that I'm transferring  
31 to the Koyukuk/Nowitna National Wildlife Refuge the middle of  
32 this month and my position is the position that supervises  
33 the RIT and so in conjunction with that we're going to wait  
34 until my replacement is hired before hiring the second RIT  
35 for the Yukon Flats, but that is something that we are  
36 intending to do and we would hope that at our fall meeting,  
37 that we'll have a second RIT to introduce to the Council.

38  
39 And with Arctic National Wildlife Refuge,  
40 there is also interest in hiring a RIT for either or both,  
41 Arctic Village and Kaktovik but again, like the Yukon Flats,  
42 the Arctic Refuge doesn't have their budget yet for this  
43 fiscal year but there definitely is interest in hiring an RIT  
44 from either one or both of those villages for the Arctic  
45 Refuge. So again, hopefully, at the fall meeting we would  
46 have somebody to introduce.

47  
48 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, I just wanted to say  
49 that I appreciate the Yukon Flats Refuge Staff allowing Paul  
50 to travel to a lot of the meetings that go in the Yukon Flats

1 and for coming to these meetings. He's a real good addition  
2 and he bring a lot of insight, especially considering he's  
3 lived in almost every village in the Yukon Flats. He's  
4 invaluable and I think you guys should do all you can to hold  
5 onto him. He does a lot more for your Refuge than you could  
6 probably ever imagine and he's just an all around good guy to  
7 be around and get information from and he's personally a good  
8 friend of mine.

9  
10 I think as far as ANWR goes and other RIT's  
11 that you hire, it will be important for us and for them, for  
12 their education and for their input to allow them to attend  
13 these meetings as well. And especially considering that they  
14 live within the communities, it can be a real good addition.

15  
16 So just appreciation.

17  
18 MR. McCLELLAN: Thank you, Craig, for the  
19 compliments and, yes, the Refuge is very appreciative of  
20 Paul's efforts and we feel very lucky to have him work for us  
21 for these last several years and we're hoping that he will  
22 continue indefinitely, although, he talks about retiring but  
23 we're hoping to delay that as long as possible. And, yes, we  
24 think it's very productive and important for any RITs that we  
25 would have for any of the Refuges to be able to attend these  
26 meetings, the Fish and Game Advisory Committee meetings and  
27 any other type of meetings in the villages or where there's  
28 representatives of the villages at those meetings.

29  
30 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, it almost seems  
31 natural that he could slide up into your position.

32  
33 MR. JAMES: I have one more question, Mr.  
34 Chairman, maybe this could be referred to Craig, since you've  
35 been working with Bob Stevens, mostly for the State, I guess,  
36 last year we approved the community harvest quota for the  
37 village of Chalkyitsik and can one of you two give us a break  
38 down on where that is at now?

39  
40 MR. FLEENER: Do you know anything about it?

41  
42 MR. McCLELLAN: No, I was just going to say  
43 that I know Bob, at the Fish and Game Advisory Committee  
44 mentioned -- talked about it and he didn't have -- I don't  
45 remember him saying any specific results. I think he did  
46 mention the number of permits that were issued under that  
47 hunt but I don't remember the harvest results.

48  
49 MR. FLEENER: Yeah, Mr. Chair, Davey, I don't  
50 have the details either. I know that there were a few

1 glitches as there will be with any new type of a management  
2 plan and I think they've sorted most of those out. There  
3 were no real bad problems and I guess it seemed to work okay.  
4 I still sort of don't like the idea because it's actually --  
5 you know, the whole intent was to have less paperwork for  
6 people and this turned out to be more paperwork and the only  
7 real flexibility to it was that you can give your harvest  
8 ticket to somebody else and they can go hunt for you. So  
9 that's a big plus. That sort of follows with what we were  
10 trying to do, where, you know, in communities we have people  
11 who traditionally do most of the harvesting of species -- of  
12 different species. And so with that management plan in  
13 place, we can go back to that type of hunting again but  
14 there's a heck of a lot of paperwork and it would be nice if  
15 we could work on something that actually decreases the  
16 paperwork by -- by a whole bunch, you know, that part of the  
17 problem with getting reporting in our villages is that  
18 there's just too darn much paperwork for people to do. And  
19 if we can reduce that somehow, I think that will really help  
20 the program along.

21  
22 But I think it worked fairly okay. But I  
23 don't know any more details than that, Davey.

24  
25 MR. JAMES: Thank you.

26  
27 MR. McCLELLAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I guess  
28 just one quick thing, on a personal note, as I mentioned  
29 earlier, this will be my last meeting before the Eastern  
30 Interior Council and I appreciate working with you all the  
31 last four years and I'm sure I'll see you all again. But  
32 thanks for the opportunity and good luck in the future.

33  
34 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Thank you, Greg.

35  
36 MR. FLEENER: Thanks Greg.

37  
38 MR. JAMES: Thank you, Greg.

39  
40 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I see Tetlin is up next.

41  
42 MR. MERRITT: Mr. Chairman, Council members.  
43 My name is Ed Merritt and I'm the manager at Tetlin National  
44 Wildlife Refuge and Connie Friend, our Refuge Information  
45 Technician is also here. Connie's put together a list of  
46 items we hope will be of interest to the Council, she'll be  
47 making our agency report. But because this was my first  
48 opportunity to work with the Eastern Interior RAC, I wanted  
49 to introduce myself. Prior to moving to Tetlin I managed the  
50 Innoko Refuge for 10 years and worked out of McGrath and

1 worked closely with the Western Interior RAC and I'm looking  
2 forward to the Joint Western and Eastern meeting tomorrow.  
3 So I'll be around today and tomorrow and I hope to get better  
4 acquainted with all of you and I'm looking forward to the  
5 opportunity for working with you. So with that I'll turn it  
6 over to Connie.

7

8 MS. FRIEND: Mr. Chairman. Our report begins  
9 with the fall moose survey that we conducted in November.  
10 The Refuge staff surveyed approximately 3,000 square miles.  
11 The estimated moose population in this area was determined to  
12 be around 873 moose. The bull/cow ratio is 84 to 100. The  
13 cow/calf ratio is 34 to 100, with .28 moose per square mile.  
14 ADF&G also participated in that survey and they're still  
15 analyzing the data and our biologists will have a report very  
16 soon that we can forward to you so that you can have the  
17 complete report.

18

19 Last year marked the first year that the  
20 Federal registration permits -- or that the Refuge was  
21 permitted to open a fall/winter caribou hunt in consultation  
22 with the Department of Fish and Game. We had a 14 day, bulls  
23 only, season with 196 permits and six designated hunter  
24 permits that were applied for and issued. In that hunt,  
25 there were approximately 40 to 50 bulls harvested and that  
26 was from October 25 through November 7, 2000. We're still  
27 awaiting data from the Office of Subsistence Management for  
28 the complete results.

29

30 There was a 10 day winter moose hunt on  
31 Refuge lands. There were six permits issued for that but  
32 there was no harvest reported.

33

34 Our study of the distribution patterns of  
35 humpback whitefish in the Upper Tanana River drainage is  
36 continuing. Radio transmitters in the whitefish is now shut  
37 down and will be reactivating in April. The last information  
38 that we received from the transmitters was in December, so  
39 about half of the fish then were located near the confluence  
40 of the Nabesna and Chisana Rivers, and the other half,  
41 surprisingly, were in Tetlin Lake. There is a more complete  
42 report of this, I don't know if Council members were given  
43 that but I have one copy and I can send you copies if  
44 anyone's interested in that.

45

46 The other study that we participated in in  
47 1998 and 1999 called the Organochlorine Concentrations in  
48 Burbot, Livers from Fairbanks, Alaska and Kanuti, Tetlin and  
49 Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuges and that's been  
50 completed. In this study, it was shown that there were

1 greater contaminant concentrations from the site below  
2 Fairbanks and Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge than from  
3 Tetlin or Kanuti Refuges, 29 burbot were sampled in all,  
4 including 11 from the Upper Tanana River and overall the  
5 Upper Tanana River burbot showed the least contamination.  
6 However, this is only one small study and, particularly,  
7 Northway still has concerns about contamination in foods so  
8 there will probably be a need for more contaminant studies as  
9 is being done in the Yukon Flats area.

10  
11 The National Park Service, Alaska Native  
12 Language Center, Duct Tape Humanities Forum and the Refuge  
13 are cooperating to conduct elder interviews regarding  
14 traditional ecological knowledge in the Upper Tanana. We're  
15 happy to report that we are able to do those -- to offer that  
16 in Athabaskan with the cooperation of the University of  
17 Alaska Language Center so that in addition to being able to  
18 document the history, the elders who prefer, may speak in  
19 their own language and we can help to preserve some of that  
20 language as well.

21  
22 The Refuge has recently hired a new fire  
23 management officer, her name is Mary Quork and she is  
24 planning to do fire hazard reduction around the Refuge and  
25 the Northway interface this summer and she'll be hiring fire  
26 crews when they're not fighting fires in other places. And  
27 she's also working -- we're working together to identify, at  
28 least, one person from each village in the surrounding area  
29 who is interested in becoming more knowledgeable about fire and  
30 we're hoping to send those people to a fire-wise training  
31 down in Kenai in April and there have been some people who  
32 have requested that and are planning to attend from the  
33 villages. And then that way the goal is to have a knowledgeable  
34 fire specialist in each village and then Mary will be able to  
35 coordinate more activities with them.

36  
37 The Refuge is also cooperating with BLM and  
38 possibly Department of Transportation to construct a world-  
39 class visitor's center and administration building that would  
40 house all those agencies, and it's been working very closely  
41 with Tanana Chiefs and with the village councils and local  
42 residents to ensure that there will be local hire and however  
43 we can benefit the villages that they'll be participating in  
44 that.

45  
46 We're also planning an outdoor experience  
47 center and that will probably be located just outside of Tok.  
48 This summer we'll be hiring from four to six local youths for  
49 our youth conservation corp, and summer programs.

1                   That concludes my report and if you have  
2 questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

3  
4                   CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Any questions for Connie.

5  
6                   MR. JAMES: Connie, I want to thank you for  
7 utilizing your local traditional people there and  
8 implementing them in your plan. Is there any population of  
9 muskrats down there?

10  
11                  MS. FRIEND: Davey, we, too, have had that  
12 same decline and we've seen it and the elders have spoken of  
13 it all around us. It seems, you know, just from my  
14 observation that, you know, I see a few houses, but if  
15 they're coming back it's also very slow. We don't have any  
16 scientific data or we haven't done any studies that can  
17 verify that.

18  
19                  MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, who is the Duct Tape  
20 Humanities Forum?

21  
22                  (Laughter)

23  
24                  MS. FRIEND: Mr. Chair, Craig, that's our  
25 local radio station. There's a group of people and they have  
26 an art forum and a radio station and they've agreed to do all  
27 the technical work so that we could have the highest quality  
28 of recording that we could get. And it's kind of a way to  
29 build a bridge with the Refuge and the community, they have  
30 all this high tech equipment that isn't being used a lot  
31 right now so by cooperating, we're pulling more people into  
32 the interviews and those of us who are doing the interviewing  
33 don't have to focus on the technical sides because, you know,  
34 there's a lot of that if you're going to get good quality.

35  
36                  MR. FLEENER: Thanks.

37  
38                  MS. FRIEND: You're welcome.

39  
40                  CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: That's it, Connie.

41  
42                  MS. FRIEND: Yes.

43  
44                  CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Thank you.

45  
46                  MS. FRIEND: Thank you.

47  
48                  CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I have a request here  
49 from Vince Mathews to speak about dinner so why don't you  
50 come up and speak before we go onto our next deal.

1 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chair, I've been dying to  
2 do this for years. Basically, I'd like to talk about the  
3 color of the dollar bill and how it is negatively impacting  
4 the subsistence use. We used to have a gentleman come to all  
5 the Board meetings that used to do that and I kind of miss  
6 him.

7  
8 (Laughter)

9  
10 MR. MATHEWS: But basically, most of you have  
11 gotten the invitation, tonight there'll be a dinner up at the  
12 house. We'll have vans at the Westmark to pick you up. If  
13 you have cars of your own, I have directions here, if you  
14 didn't get the invitation or forgot to bring it. And for  
15 Staff, there's also other invitations here. Most of those  
16 were contacted by email. It would be nice by the close of  
17 your meeting today to get a general idea who might be coming.  
18 So that's all I wanted to talk about so it's 6:30 tonight is  
19 the target time, vans at 6:00 at the Westmark and directions  
20 are here. And that's all I had. And that would include  
21 other staff. It was hard to do this by email.

22  
23 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Vince, you're not trying  
24 to get even with us are you?

25  
26 (Laughter)

27  
28 MR. MATHEWS: No. No, no, no, no, there's no  
29 getting even. It's just an evening together to get to know  
30 each other and that's it. We tried to do it last year but my  
31 wife's illness prevented doing that last year when we met in  
32 this location. So I'll leave invitations or whatever you  
33 want to call them, directions and that with Odessa and I'll  
34 be here a few more minutes if you want to pick them up or  
35 whatever and then we'll go from there. And again, we do have  
36 vans for those that don't have their own vehicles.

37  
38 MR. FLEENER: Will we be checking weapons at  
39 the door?

40  
41 (Laughter)

42  
43 MR. MATHEWS: I don't have a metal detector  
44 and my dog is awful friendly so I don't know -- no, we won't  
45 be checking for that. And then for those that have two-wheel  
46 drive vehicles, you may want to park on the road, I don't  
47 think you'll make it up the driveway but you might. There's  
48 gravel spread out but if you don't make it the first time  
49 then you're done.

50



(Laughter)

MR. MATHEWS: But anyways, you can park down below and walk up. The driveway has Christmas lights lining them, so that's a landmark to look for and I will have them turned on. I had them turned off last night but they'll be turned on tonight.

CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Thank you, Vince. I think we'll all go.

MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, I believe next we have the National Park Service, Denali, Wrangell-St. Elias and Yukon-Charley. Denali can come up if they have an agency report to present.

CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Come on up Hollis.

MR. TWITCHELL: I'm Hollis Twitchell. I'm with Denali National Park. I thought I'd take the time today to talk about some Denali issues for a couple of reasons, even though there's overlap with Western Interior, I think your agenda tomorrow will probably be pretty full and we might not have the opportunity to get this information out to you, so if I could take the time now I'd like to do that. Also last time in Tanana, we sort of came up on the end of your program and I didn't have a chance to say much to you so I'll catch up. I only have a few items so it shouldn't take too long.

What I took over to the Chair was copies of an ethnographic overview and assessment for the Denali area that has just been completed as well as copies of village histories that we had prepared for Cantwell, Lake Minchumina, Nickoli and Tanana. Both the ethnographic overviews and the village histories were all part of the same project. The ethnographic overview was done through a contract with the State Subsistence Division and they prepared that work working with the communities and also working through the literature that's out there and available for the Denali area. The village histories, on the other hand, were contracts with the tribal councils from those particular communities where they were asked to participate and prepare their own histories in their own words for their communities. So those are appendices to the ethnographic overview and assessment. Those were just finished two days ago and presented to the Denali Subsistence Resource Commission. So they're out for review by the communities at this time. I only have one copy so if you really have a particular interest I'll try to get more for you, but right now we only

1 have 50 sets of copies to get back out to the communities for  
2 their critical review.

3  
4 The other item I took over to the Chair was  
5 a subsistence brochure that was requested by the Denali  
6 Subsistence Resource Commission. They felt that there was a  
7 need to get more information out about cultural and  
8 subsistence user going on in the Denali area and that we  
9 needed to get this out to visitors who were new to the state,  
10 new to Denali and had no idea what sort of uses that were  
11 going on in the area. So this brochure is now out and it  
12 will be in a folded version just like the normal brochure for  
13 the Park and available to people as they enter it so they can  
14 pick it up along with the brochure, the general Park  
15 brochure. And I think it will probably be pretty popular.  
16 It's already attracted a lot of interest just as people walk  
17 by to see what's going on with it. We've utilized a lot of  
18 assistance from the Denali Commission themselves in providing  
19 photographs and input for the brochure.

20  
21 The SRC just met two days ago. They are  
22 going to have their next meeting the end of April where  
23 they're going to take up back country management planning in  
24 Denali. It's a planning process the Park started this year.  
25 They feel particular interest in that plan since it deals  
26 with recreational use into the areas that they predominately  
27 use. And because it's such a major concern to them on  
28 potential conflicts with recreational visitors and users and  
29 to IRAs that they use, that they put it on as a major agenda  
30 item so that their input can be brought in at the very first  
31 phases of this planning process. So that will be coming up  
32 in April when they'll get together with Park staff.

33  
34 The second to the last item I was going to  
35 mention was that the Park was very concerned about the  
36 database that's available for our communities, subsistence  
37 communities, known as the community profile studies that were  
38 done in many areas by the state of Alaska in the early '80s.  
39 Much of that work for our communities is very dated, 15 to 20  
40 years out for many of them. And one community, in  
41 particular, Lake Minchumina, had never had anything like that  
42 done. We were also concerned that much of the C&T use, the  
43 C&T determinations that are going through the Federal process  
44 are based on a lot of this information that was, not only  
45 dated, but also only looked at periods of time, generally a  
46 10 to 15 year period of use and we wanted to expand that to  
47 more accurately reflect the communities long-term use. So  
48 the Park has funded work to be done in Cantwell, Lake  
49 Minchumina, Nickoli and Talida. We, again, have approached  
50 the tribal councils, first of all, to get permission to work

1 within their communities. So far we've only been into  
2 Cantwell. This winter we're planning to go to Lake  
3 Minchumina and Talida. Through that process we are also  
4 hiring local people to assist doing the interviews and the  
5 mapping and the other components within the communities.

6  
7 The last item I was going to mention is that  
8 Denali is moving towards bringing an internship for someone  
9 to work in cultural and subsistence resources so we will be  
10 recruiting and looking for people with knowledge and  
11 experience in the Denali area, with the communities and with  
12 the uses, so we'll be going to the University and also into  
13 the communities to try to recruit for that position.

14  
15 That's what I had to present. If you have  
16 any questions I'll try to answer them.

17  
18 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I expect we'll see you  
19 tomorrow, too, there, Hollis.

20  
21 MR. TWITCHELL: Thank you.

22  
23 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Thank you.

24  
25 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair. I don't see any  
26 Wrangell-St. Elias Staff or Yukon-Charley.

27  
28 MR. FLEENER: There they are.

29  
30 MR. MIKE: Okay.

31  
32 MR. NELSON: Yes, thank you Mr. Chairman and  
33 members of the committee. I'm Dave Nelson of the National  
34 Park Service. I do work out of Anchorage. And Devi Sharp  
35 and Eric Veetch from Wrangell were not able to attend today  
36 and they send their regrets, they had some other commitments.  
37 Perhaps what I could very briefly do for the committee this  
38 morning is there have been regulatory proposals discussed  
39 regarding the Copper River, and what I would like to do in a  
40 relatively few minutes is share with you, at least,  
41 conceptually, what those proposals are for the Copper River  
42 as they may have some effect on this Regional committee.

43  
44 I'll go through them quite briefly. Some of  
45 them are what I would call, two are what I would call  
46 basically a housekeeping proposal or administrative  
47 proposals. In other words, they don't change how the fishery  
48 occurs, they do not change the allocation of the resource,  
49 they're merely cleaning up the regulations.

1                   And being discussed for the Copper River  
2 area, the first one would be to -- in speaking about  
3 steelhead trout and rainbow trout. If you'll go through the  
4 regulations in the subsistence handout, you'll see that  
5 constant reference to steelhead trout and rainbow trout.  
6 Technically that is not correct. A rainbow trout and a  
7 steelhead trout is currently recognized as being one in the  
8 species, they are the same. The steelhead trout is the  
9 androgenous form that goes to sea and returns to spawn,  
10 resident form is the rainbow trout which remains in the fresh  
11 water. But once again, this is just a housekeeping -- what  
12 I would call a housekeeping or administrative proposal and it  
13 would be to simply correct that in the Federal Register and  
14 in the information which is disseminated to the public.

15  
16                   The second proposal that's being discussed is  
17 at the current time the regulation pertaining to subsistence  
18 fishing under Federal regulations simply states you may not  
19 use live non-indigenous fish for bait. And what exactly does  
20 that mean? Well, indigenous implies the word native or  
21 naturally occurring, but you may not use live non-indigenous  
22 fish as bait. Non-indigenous to where? North America?  
23 Alaska? The drainages within Alaska or streams within  
24 Alaska? And what has been discussed is simply amending that  
25 regulation to say you may not use live fish as bait, period.  
26 Now, I'm not familiar if any subsistence users do use live  
27 fish for bait and if so it's certainly appreciated if you'd  
28 call it to my attention and we can work on this regulation.  
29 We can make this very understandable for everyone. But at  
30 the present time the suggestion is is simply to change that  
31 to you may not use live fish as bait. Once again, quite a  
32 straightforward proposal.

33  
34                   MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, is that only live  
35 fish or any other live type of bait allowed?

36  
37                   MR. NELSON: It refers only to live fish.

38  
39                   Now, they become a little bit more  
40 complicated. In the Copper River we actually have two  
41 subdistricts within the Copper River, the lower subdistrict  
42 is the Chitina subdistrict and this is the area of the  
43 State's dipnet subsistence fishery. Upstream from the  
44 McCarthy Bridge stretching all the way up to Slana for a  
45 distance of about a hundred miles, we then have the  
46 Glennallen subdistrict which is primarily a fish wheel  
47 fishery operated by rural residents or you may use a dipnet  
48 also up there if you wish and rod and reel would now be  
49 included for Federal users. One of the interesting things  
50 here is that, and this is getting back -- I'm going to use a

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1 term, rainbow steelhead -- or rainbow/steelhead, that one  
2 species of fish. The way the regulation reads right now is  
3 if a subsistence user catches a rainbow/steelhead in a fish  
4 wheel in the Glennallen subdistrict, then that fish must be  
5 returned to the water, you may not retain it. Take this one  
6 step further, I have not seen the permit but ADF&G asks that  
7 the number of rainbow/steelhead be required on the permit.  
8 So the regulations are very, very inconsistent. What catches  
9 my eye is making them more inconsistent and I'm sure you  
10 folks know better than I, but the rainbow trout/steelhead is  
11 caught in the fish wheel and it's dead. And the way the  
12 present regulation is written you would have to return a dead  
13 fish to the water. And we believe that with a few word  
14 changes here, we can correct that and retention would be  
15 allowed. That would be a liberalization, a very slight one,  
16 because for the most part it's felt that less than 100  
17 steelhead are caught in the Glennallen subdistrict. But it  
18 would be a slight liberalization and you know, quite frankly,  
19 folks that have been doing this customarily and traditionally  
20 for years would now be able to do it lawfully.

21  
22 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Excuse me, sir.

23  
24 MR. NELSON: Yes.

25  
26 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: It seems like we'll be  
27 dealing with fisheries tomorrow, is what I want to hear  
28 really is about wildlife, like we have been dealing with  
29 caribou and Wrangell-St. Elias, with those proposals --  
30 concerning those proposals; we'll probably hear about  
31 fisheries tomorrow. I don't mean to cut you off or anything  
32 but we're trying to keep it like wildlife today and fisheries  
33 tomorrow.

34  
35 MR. NELSON: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
36 No, I didn't understand that, and I am not qualified to speak  
37 on anything but the fisheries. I will be here tomorrow and  
38 I'll be more than happy to summarize these very briefly at  
39 your convenience.

40  
41 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Okay. How much more do  
42 you have there.

43  
44 MR. NELSON: I think there are probably about  
45 three proposals, Mr. Chairman.

46  
47 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Can you do it in five  
48 minutes?

49  
50 MR. NELSON: I will do them in five minutes.

1 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Okay.

2

3 MR. NELSON: Then the second part of that  
4 proposal is, for example, there is also a regulation which  
5 says, if a rainbow/steelhead is caught in a net, it must be  
6 returned to the water in the Copper River. And I'm sorry --  
7 I'm sorry, they may be retained, a rainbow trout/steelhead is  
8 caught in a net in the Copper River they may be retained.  
9 The only place there's a net right now in the Copper River is  
10 in that area of the State, the Chitina subdistrict, and it's  
11 dipnet. So if a steelhead swims into the dipnet it can be  
12 retained but if it goes further upstream and swims into a  
13 fish wheel and dies it may not be retained. What we are  
14 proposing to do here and what's been discussed is to change  
15 that, if it's caught in the dipnet the fish is released.

16  
17 I will go through this, Mr. Chairman, I  
18 promised you five minutes, this one is a little bit more  
19 complicated, we're just really getting into the nuts and  
20 bolts of some changes. Last year the Federal Subsistence  
21 Board found customary and traditional use in the Chitina  
22 subdistrict for the eight Ahtna communities. However, there  
23 was no season, harvest limit, et cetera adopted at that time,  
24 merely customary and traditional use. This proposal just  
25 fleshes out what would be a season and this is entirely up to  
26 those who submitted the proposal, these are thoughts, please.  
27 In the Chitina subdistrict, that there would be a season  
28 which is identical to the State season, so State and Federal  
29 regulations would be aligned as far as season. And based on  
30 that meeting at the Federal Subsistence Board, those who are  
31 eligible Federal subsistence users in the Chitina subdistrict  
32 would include residents of Chitina, Cantwell, Chistochina,  
33 Copper Center, Gakona, Gulkana, Mentasta Lake and Tazlina,  
34 and residents of those communities found by the Federal  
35 Subsistence Board to have C&T in this subdistrict at the  
36 Board's 2000 meeting. The method of harvest, Mr. Chairman,  
37 would be by dipnet as is customarily used there now by State  
38 subsistence users and Federal users would be able to use rod  
39 and reel because it is a legal harvest method. And the  
40 Federal qualified subsistence user eligible to fish in the  
41 Chitina subdistrict, in other words if you can fish in the  
42 Chitina subdistrict and take your fish, would also be  
43 eligible to fish in the Glennallen subdistrict. So the  
44 individual would be able to fish in both subdistricts. Right  
45 now it's one or the other. But we're proposing that it be  
46 liberalized to either one of those. And in combination, just  
47 as a note, those two districts form the Upper Copper River  
48 district. Perhaps a more major change, only one permit would  
49 be required for the Copper River district. What we're trying  
50 to do there is to save the subsistence users administrative

1 paperwork. Instead of having to get different permits, get  
2 one permit. And the combined seasonal limit in the Upper  
3 Copper River district which contains the Chitina subdistrict  
4 down here and the Glennallen up here, that combination would  
5 not change from what it is now, a family is allowed a maximum  
6 of 500 fish. That doesn't change. The individual could take  
7 500 fish if so desired from the Chitina subdistrict and then  
8 done or he could take 250 there and 250 from the Glennallen  
9 and then is done. So the number of fish does not change.

10  
11 What I've gone through here, Mr. Chairman, is  
12 that basically it's a little bit different way of doing  
13 business on the Copper River, it doesn't reallocate the fish  
14 nor should the number of subsistence fish caught be anything  
15 significantly larger.

16  
17 I do have one more very, very brief proposal  
18 and that pertains to the fishery known as Batzulnetas. That  
19 fishery in 2001 will be managed under the National Park  
20 Service. We'll be the management agency. Regulations passed  
21 by the Federal Subsistence Board dictate that people that  
22 fish Batzulnetas will get a National Park Service permit.  
23 What we are proposing here is a liberalization to allow those  
24 people that fish Batzulnetas, which we understand is very  
25 small, that they would also be able to get a permit for  
26 either the Glennallen or for the Chitina subdistrict. That  
27 is a liberalization. We believe that it will result in very  
28 limited increase in harvest.

29  
30 And with that, Mr. Chairman, I hope I came in  
31 within six minutes.

32  
33 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Thank you. Is there any  
34 questions? Thank you.

35  
36 MR. NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

37  
38 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, we have Yukon-Charley  
39 and if there's any staff from Yukon-Charley that would like  
40 to make a presentation, if not, on the agenda, appointments  
41 to the Subsistence Resource Commissions. The Council's  
42 charter, one of their duties is to appoint.....

43  
44 MR. FLEENER: Wait a minute.

45  
46 MR. MIKE: Pardon? Sorry, Mr. Chair.

47  
48 MR. TWITCHELL: Hollis Twitchell. Again, I  
49 just had spoke with Dave Mills, the superintendent for the  
50 Gates of the Arctic/Yukon-Charley just a few minutes ago and

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1 he just wanted to express there were two concerns  
2 particularly for Yukon-Charley that they have. One of them  
3 was the Fortymile Caribou Herd and he indicated that they  
4 concur with the actions that you took yesterday.

5  
6 The other issue they are concerned about is  
7 fisheries in the Upper Yukon and lack of opportunity for  
8 local rural residents in that area.

9  
10 So those were the two items that are  
11 prominent in their minds.

12  
13 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Thank you, Hollis. Then,  
14 Donald, what Preserve do we have to make an appointment to  
15 for this SRC?

16  
17 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, the appointments to the  
18 subsistence resource commission, the Council's charter lists  
19 that as one of your duties, to appoint a Council member to  
20 the Denali or Wrangell-St. Elias SRC. And the reason it is  
21 on the agenda item is if there's any members that are  
22 currently, their term is currently expired, that's the only  
23 reason I brought it up otherwise the SRCs would probably  
24 provide a recommendation to have some Council member  
25 reappointed.

26  
27 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I thought at our Tanana  
28 meeting we did reappoint Paul Starr to the Denali and then I  
29 thought we already had Chuck going to the Wrangell-St. Elias  
30 National Park. And I thought that was already taken care of  
31 last fall.

32  
33 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, yes, that is true. So  
34 any terms that may come up maybe Clarence Summers from the  
35 National Park Service can provide us an update on the terms  
36 for each commission.

37  
38 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, while Clarence is  
39 coming up, I just wanted to remind Donald that if there are  
40 appointments to SRCs or anything else that we need to  
41 appoint, that it would be good if we get notification before  
42 we actually attend the meeting and get some information on  
43 the person, unless, of course, it's reappointment. But  
44 because we always have new people joining this Council and  
45 I've requested this before with Vince, and he provided the  
46 information, and that is that we get the information well  
47 ahead of time so we can read up on people who want to be  
48 appointed so we're not sitting here and need to try to rush  
49 through something in three minutes when the person may not be  
50 who we think -- or the person wanting the appointment may not



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1 be someone we want to appoint so -- like Chuck -- no, just  
2 kidding.

3

4 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, just for the Council's  
5 benefit, I just needed to get an update on the Council's SRC  
6 term so we'll get an idea of what's going on.

7

8 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Go ahead Clarence.

9

10 MR. SUMMERS: Mr. Chairman, Council members,  
11 for your information Paul Starr's term expires November 2003  
12 and that's a similar situation for the appointment of Chuck  
13 Miller, his term expires November 2003. And what I'll do is  
14 I'll work with Donald and provide him with information on  
15 possible candidates provided from superintendents, we'll pass  
16 it along to Donald so that you'll have a list of names to  
17 consider when these terms expire.

18

19 I've got one other item if you'll let me do  
20 this, I've got an example copy of a newsletter the Park  
21 Service plans to publish, biannually, Subsistence Resource  
22 Commission newsletter and I'd like your permission to pass  
23 this along to you through the mail, you'll receive copies of  
24 it and hopefully it will give you some background and update  
25 on some of the actions taken at the Commission meetings  
26 around the state. Janice Meldrum coordinates the publication  
27 of this. Her name is listed on the back with a phone contact  
28 number and email address. And so if you have any comments on  
29 this process, the newsletter, you can pass those comments  
30 along to Janice.

31

32 And that's all I have.

33

34 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, will those be  
35 available via email or are you just going to be mailing them  
36 out?

37

38 MR. SUMMERS: According to the information  
39 that I have, yes, it will be posted at NPS, we have a web  
40 site and that listing is here, but that's the goal to provide  
41 information to the public and to Commission members to  
42 improve communications.

43

44 Thank you.

45

46 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Any more questions for  
47 Mr. Summers? Thank you.

48

49 MR. SUMMERS: Thank you.

50

1                   CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Since we're almost done  
2 with our agenda here and it's pretty close to lunch, I think  
3 we'll just go through our agenda here and get it over with  
4 and then we'll go to lunch after that and just meet tomorrow  
5 in the joint meeting.

6  
7                   MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, we just have one more  
8 -- if there are any other agencies or groups that would like  
9 to make a presentation to the Council, now's their time and  
10 then we can go onto correspondence received and sent.

11  
12                  CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Are there any agencies or  
13 groups that would like to say something to us at this time?

14  
15                  MR. FLEENER: No.

16  
17                  CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Seeing none and hearing  
18 nobody, let's move on.

19  
20                  MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, the next item on the  
21 agenda is correspondence received and sent. The only items  
22 that we've received for the Council is the Wrangell-St. Elias  
23 and Denali SRC letters -- or recommendations they made on the  
24 proposals. There is one other correspondence that we  
25 received that was of interest to the Eastern Interior Council  
26 and that had to do with the Yukon Flats planning committee  
27 meeting and that was held in Fort Yukon, which I forgot to  
28 include in our book here. So if anybody needs a copy of the  
29 letter I can send the letter to them.

30  
31                  MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, just for Donald's  
32 information, the reason we sort of added this into the agenda  
33 was to make sure that this Council would have a -- not that  
34 we need more paper but that we would receive a constant  
35 supply of information that we wouldn't have to digest here,  
36 all sitting here at the meetings. And that when you guys  
37 receive something, a letter, whether or not you think it's  
38 important, unless of course, it's a K-Mart ad or something,  
39 we don't want those, but letters that may be important we  
40 wanted them sent to all of the members so we can review them  
41 and have time to comment on them and then when we come to our  
42 meeting we'll be prepared instead of receiving seven or eight  
43 letters while we're here or else completely missing  
44 something.

45  
46                  Thanks.

47  
48                  MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, from that we can move  
49 on unless the Council members have any questions or comments  
50 regarding correspondence received and sent, otherwise we can

1 move on to Council members closing comments and concerns.

2

3 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I believe Ida Hildebrand  
4 wanted to say something. State your name for the record, who  
5 you are and who you work for.

6

7 MR. HILDEBRAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Ida  
8 Hildebrand, BIA Staff Committee member. For your information  
9 on correspondence, I received a copy of correspondence from  
10 Alaska Wildlife Alliance and I had given it to Helga,  
11 hopefully to give it to your coordinators but perhaps she  
12 hasn't had an opportunity to do that yet. Basically they're  
13 requesting support from tribes and villages to seek  
14 legislation that would limit hunting, guiding, guiding  
15 operations, transportation and outfitters and to request that  
16 they all be licensed. And I believe they wrote to all the  
17 villages and want village support to get new legislation to  
18 be more restrictive to protect, especially moose. And this  
19 is just for your information.

20

21 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Thank you.

22

23 MR. FLEENER: Thank you.

24

25 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: We'll move down to  
26 Council member closing and comments and concerns. We'll  
27 start off with you, Chuck.

28

29 MR. MILLER: I guess, the only really  
30 concern I got is like what Craig brought up yesterday, you  
31 know, with the State not being here, you know, how are we  
32 supposed to do this co-management thing. I have a feeling  
33 that that's going to be a big concern with a lot of people  
34 here. It's kind of hard to work something out when you're  
35 only working with one side.

36

37 So basically that's the only concern I really  
38 got.

39

40 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Comments.

41

42 MR. MILLER: No, not really. You're doing  
43 good, Gerald.

44

45 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Davey.

46

47 MR. JAMES: Yeah, that's the same concerns I  
48 had there, too, with the State. Mainly that's one of the  
49 reasons why we selected this location here, it's easier for  
50 the State and Fed people to come here.

1 I guess a little bit on the situation with  
2 the fisheries. You know, I believe that we've done as much  
3 as we could do this last three years, you know. I think  
4 everybody is going to be playing their part.

5  
6 I guess, you know, we really forgot who gave  
7 us this wildlife and fish, he was our creator and we should  
8 always thank him before the meetings. We should also bless  
9 him and tell him to guide us in giving us back our resources  
10 because he's the one that brought us here and he's the one  
11 that gave us the resource. As much as we want to implement  
12 our management plan, we still need his helping hand. And we  
13 should always remember that.

14  
15 Thank you.

16  
17 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yeah, Davey, I could  
18 respond to that. One thing that I didn't do for -- when me  
19 and Donald, we were kind of rushing through this here, in  
20 developing this agenda, and I forgot a tradition that the  
21 Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council does and I  
22 sincerely apologize for it, we usually have an opening  
23 prayer, which we didn't do and we usually have comments from  
24 a local elder, which we didn't do so I apologize for that, I  
25 forgot about that on the agenda.

26  
27 So I'd like to hear from Jim, now.

28  
29 MR. WILDE: I noticed that. I just want to  
30 comment that I think the Fortymile Caribou Herd study group  
31 did an excellent job. I hope that -- there's too many names  
32 here -- Unit 25(D) works out as half as good as the moose  
33 study there and I just hope I get some salmon this summer.  
34 I'll give it to Craig next.

35  
36 MR. FLEENER: Yes, Mr. Chair, I only have a  
37 couple things, remarkably. But, although we've made some  
38 pretty strong strides, I think with some of the decisions for  
39 fishing, I'm still extremely troubled by the tremendous  
40 amount of waste that goes -- that takes place off shore and  
41 I think we need to continue to address that. Hopefully, we  
42 do have more fish this summer. We just keep hoping and  
43 praying for that. But if not, I think we're going to have to  
44 keep looking and the only thing we can control is our own  
45 harvest. We can't control anomalous ocean conditions. We  
46 can't control the weather. Although, I think we can control  
47 the weather with harp, but we can't do much for anomalous  
48 ocean conditions which are probably having a lot of impact on  
49 our fish. So the only other thing we can control is harvest.  
50 And I think if we don't get the amount of fish back that we

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1 need, we're going to have to look elsewhere and that is with  
2 off shore fishing and even if we have to go way off shore to  
3 address some of these issues, I think we're going to have to  
4 take the bull by the horns and do that.

5

6 I'm glad Davey brought the opening prayer  
7 thing up, that's -- I was pretty shocked myself that we  
8 forgot that but I think that we do have, at least one elder  
9 out in the audience who could at least close us in prayer and  
10 maybe provide some guidance for the future if the Council  
11 would allow it.

12

13 And I think that's enough for me, I've talked  
14 about my concerns throughout the whole meeting.

15

16 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yeah, I still feel kind  
17 of bad for not having the opening prayer and comments from an  
18 elder from this area. But some of my concerns are going to  
19 be reflected from what an elder told me in Tanana. Is that,  
20 all these moose populations, moose sickness, the beavers, to  
21 local fish populations, they're all being affected by this  
22 over population of beaver. The block dams up, they don't let  
23 fresh water go through, they leave the resident fish in there  
24 without passing on, they leave stagnant water behind that  
25 animals have to drink, birds, all the animals and that makes  
26 the animals sick. And this beaver, it's just a rodent he  
27 told me. It's just a rodent. And this little rodent took  
28 over this land and it's adversely affecting us. He told me  
29 this in the Native tongue, just this little rodent ruined all  
30 this for us and we're all worried about these big animals  
31 affecting other animals, fisheries, humans affecting that,  
32 while we ignore this little rodent and now look at what it's  
33 done to us. I'm just going to leave that at that. We have  
34 to do something to manage this little rodent for the  
35 betterment of all these other resources, including fish.

36

37 Another thing that's a great concern in my  
38 area but since there's no Federal land around it, is that,  
39 the moose -- there's more moose hunters now. It's getting  
40 larger and larger and that's affecting our people and how  
41 they put away their yearly supply of meat. We can't be  
42 forever competing just to put winter meat away, our yearly  
43 meat away all the time. I said this before and I'm going to  
44 say it again, you guys, the agencies, both the State and  
45 Federal has to distinguish between want. What I mean by want  
46 is sport. Sport hunters, they just take the horns and they  
47 say they're going to take care of the meat in the field but  
48 they let it spoil. We don't want spoiled meat. Sure, some  
49 of our villagers are thankful for getting the meat but not in  
50 a spoiled condition. This shows us, our elders, that it's

1 very disrespectful. They're not showing no respect to the  
2 animal that they hunt and let it spoil in the woods, that  
3 there's people in our region that's hurting by fish and  
4 everything, that depends on that resource, they ain't doing  
5 us no good by doing that. Actually they're hurting us more,  
6 too.

7  
8           You know, and I want to mention something  
9 about the caribou. Since the pipeline, I always mention  
10 this, since the pipeline got put in, we don't see no more  
11 caribou behind Tanana. They used to come eight miles away  
12 from us. And whoever said that pipeline doesn't affect  
13 caribou lied to us in Tanana. That was just a blatant lie.  
14 Ever since that pipeline was built, we don't get no more  
15 caribou. The only caribou that comes close to us is from the  
16 Western Arctic Caribou Herd.

17  
18           And for the fisheries, I'm going to really  
19 strive and work hard so that people in the Upper Yukon region  
20 can harvest fish this year, no matter if it's pushing for  
21 closures in the Yukon, even down to 12 hours. When I heard  
22 this 36 hour period for two weeks, that's the first time I  
23 heard it, I heard it was 12 hour periods for one week, not 36  
24 hours. Where you get 36 hours is further up the river but I  
25 guess I got mixed up in that one.

26  
27           And I'd like to thank all the people that was  
28 here and I'd like to thank my Council members, and everybody.  
29 And I'd like to request Paul Williams get up after we choose  
30 a time and place of next meeting to say a closing prayer.

31  
32           MR. MIKE: My apologies, too, Mr. Chair,  
33 about not including the opening prayers by an elder at the  
34 start of the meeting. Craig brought up a good suggestion of  
35 bringing up Paul Williams at the meetings end so we could get  
36 a closing prayer. Anyway, the next item on the agenda is  
37 future meeting plans and we have a calendar in your book at  
38 the last page of your book. Just for the Council's  
39 information, the fall 2001 meeting window starts September  
40 1st and ends October 20th. And just for the Council's  
41 information, AFN week starts during the week of October 15th,  
42 so just keep that in mind. But the Northwest Regional  
43 Advisory Council met last week and they haven't provided a  
44 meeting date and Bristol Bay hasn't provided a meeting date  
45 so this Council will have the first stab at when they want to  
46 meet.

47  
48           CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: How does October 1  
49 through 3rd sound to you guys?

1 MR. WILDE: Not the first.

2  
3 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: 9, 10, 11.

4  
5 MR. MILLER: In Eagle.

6  
7 MR. WILDE: Come on.

8  
9 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: What about an  
10 alternative?

11  
12 MR. WILDE: Central Hot Springs.

13  
14 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Okay.

15  
16 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, before we have Paul  
17 close out the meeting, we can briefly discuss for next  
18 meeting some topics, the next item on the agenda.

19  
20 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Donald, I believe that  
21 the topics and stuff will come up through this meeting  
22 tomorrow and through what we covered the last two days, we  
23 could just recap on that later.

24  
25 MR. FLEENER: From discussions.

26  
27 MR. MIKE: Okay, Mr. Chair, thank you.

28  
29 MR. WILLIAMS: (Prayer - In Native)

30  
31 While during our short lives, our  
32 forefathers, our fathers and our mothers, they always told us  
33 to put God's name, our creator down there first when we're  
34 going to do something. They always say that every time,  
35 every day, they remind us to remember the great spirit and  
36 the maker of this heaven and earth and to make sure that  
37 everything we do is in his name. We pray for success in our  
38 co-management, we pray today for that. We pray for  
39 understanding among each other. We pray for working towards  
40 what we're doing for the good of everybody, not only today  
41 but for the future for our decedents to enjoy the resource  
42 that we have today. And that, by God's help we will also  
43 have fish for the future through our effort and his help, we  
44 say this in his son's name, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

45  
46 Amen.

47  
48 MR. FLEENER: Motion to adjourn.

49  
50 MR. WILDE: Second.

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1

CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: It's adjourned then.

2

3

(END OF PROCEEDINGS)

4

\* \* \* \* \*



Joseph P. Kolasinski  
Notary Public in and for Alaska